

*P H L E G O N*

EXAMINED

**Critically and Impartially.**





# P H L E G O N

EXAMINED

Critically and Impartially.

In Answer to the late DISSERTATION  
and DEFENCE of Dr. SYKES.

To which is added a

POSTSCRIPT,

Explaining a PASSAGE in

F E R T U L L I A N.

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By JOHN CHAPMAN M. A.,  
Fellow of *King's College in Cambridge.*

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Videmur fanè melius consulturi Rei Christianæ, & Honori Sospi-  
tatoris Nostri, si insigne hoc Prodigium etiam Hostium nostro-  
rum ore confirmemus; imprimis cum nihil repugnet; quàm  
si illud evertendo, vel unum armorum genus, quibus, adspi-  
rante Divino favore, cum successu uti possumus, ex manibus  
Christianorum excutiamus. *Reland. Palæstin. illustrat. Tom.*  
*I. p. 30.*

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C A M B R I D G E,

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# INTRODUCTION.

WHEN first Dr. *Sykes's Dissertation* came abroad, I had not a thought of passing one single Remark upon it in Print, expecting to see it freely and accurately examin'd by much abler Hands, and promising to my self the agreeable Entertainment of a Reader, without the trouble of a Writer. Neither was I disappointed in the Event; for before many Months had passed, I had the pleasure to see the Point debated learnedly and copiously by several ingenious Gentlemen, who acquitted themselves so well upon the occasion, as to leave very little room for any new Improvements, and to me, I am sure, very small Encouragement to come after them. But at last some Persons, with whom I have the honour to be acquainted, thinking the Subject not quite exhausted, were pleas'd to desire, that I would enter into this dispute, and they by repeated Importunities prevailed upon me to engage in it. This must be my Apology to the Reader for troubling him so late with my Thoughts concerning *Phlegon*, and to Dr. *Sykes* for thus appearing against him in Publick.

THAT Learned Gentleman out of an ardent Zeal for the *Service of Christianity* is willing

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to remove out of the way, whatever either can be prov'd to be false, or at best cannot be prov'd to be true. Pref. to Def. p. 8. He is firmly of opinion, that the *Addition* of very disputable, if not totally impertinent Testimonies does but weaken the Evidence for Christianity, and can never possibly add any force to what is urged for the truth of it. Introd. to Dissert. p. 5. And herein, I freely acknowledge, he has my concurrence, and who they are, that will oppose him in it, I know not. But I must beg leave to observe on the other side, that we are not obliged upon any Principle to give up a Testimony immediately, because it happens to be disputed, or to judge it to be false and impertinent upon every suggestion of its being so. Were this to be the case, we must e'en give up the strongest Evidences in favour of Christianity, the *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, which attest and support it; for all these both in *ancient* and *modern* times have met with very violent Adversaries, who have us'd their utmost Endeavours to wrest and extort them from us. By which I do not mean to rank the *Testimony*, which is now the Subject of Debate, with those *prime* and *fundamental* Evidences of Christianity upon which it is chiefly built, and must forever rest; but only to shew in general, that the *Truth* and *Validity* of Testimonies and Evidences does not depend on the *Assent* or *Dissent* of particular Persons, but on their own real Weight

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Weight and Authority. We see every Day such amazing Instances of *Weakness*, *Blindness*, *Fancy*, and *Extravagancy* in Men, that were we to take our estimate of *things* from thence alone, we could hardly admit one Truth in a thousand as certain and *indisputable*. I would not deny in the mean time, that some *Truths* there are, and some *Testimonies* and *Evidences*, which a Man may doubt of and dispute without incurring Reproaches or hurting his Reputation among judicious Men, if he does it with *Candour* and *Modesty*. Neither am I unwilling to allow, that the Testimony of *Phlegon* now before us is of such a kind; and I am sensible, that considerable Men have published their Doubts of it before Dr. *Sykes*. It is not esteem'd (by any one that I know of) one of the grand and principal Supports of Christianity, the removal of which would shake the whole Superstructure; neither is it supposed to carry such a dazzling and irresistible Light with it, that a Man cannot disown it without shutting his eyes. No. This is not what any one contends for. It is urged only as collateral and supernumerary Evidence, to confirm and illustrate what is *fully* and *sufficiently* established upon other Authorities. And as it may have its value and subordinate uses in this view, I do not think it necessary wholly to discard and renounce it, while Reason and Criticism appear to me to favour and de-



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send it. It is worth considering with some degree of Care and Attention as a celebrated Passage in History, and worth disputing with some degree of Zeal and Earnestness, as it may serve to *corroborate* and *adorn* the Gospel. What farther encourages me to offer something concerning *Phlegon*, is the great Regard, which Men of the highest Character for Learning, Penetration, and Judgment have all along express'd towards it, and continue to express at this day. Such were *Grotius*<sup>a</sup>, *Huetius*<sup>b</sup>, *Tillemont*<sup>c</sup>, and *Reland*<sup>d</sup>, and such now living are *Fabricius*<sup>e</sup> and *Wolfius*<sup>f</sup>; besides many others, that I could name. Men so eminently distinguished as these are in the Learned World, declaring in favour of *Phlegon*, notwithstanding the Scruples and Exceptions of *Kepler*, *Vossius*, *Bayle*, and *Basnage*, incline me to think, that *Phlegon* may yet be defended with good grace even against the Learned Dr. *Sykes*, who seems, as far as I can discern, to argue pretty much in their way and upon the same Hypothesis.

a Grot. in Matt. c. XXVII. v. 46.

b Huet. Demonst. Evang. Propos. III.

c Memoires Tom. I. Notes XXXV. Sur N. S. Jesus Christ.

d Reland. Palæstin. Illust. Tom. I. cap. V.

e Quamquam Chronologicis quibusdam Difficultatibus permoti quidam Viri Doctissimi de aliâ Eclipsi loqui Phlegontem existimant. — non tamen usque adeo explorate mihi videntur illorum Rationes, ut non malim veteribus assentiri, cum certissimum sit Phlegontem etiam alia de Rebus Christi & Judæorum Chronico suo inferuisse. *Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. Lib. IV. c. 13.*

f Curæ Criticæ & Philolog. Tom. I. p. 407.

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ome As to the *Chinese* Accounts of an extraor-  
ated dinary Darkness in antient times, I shall leave  
with them to those who are better Judges and great-  
may er Admirers of them. I would not undertake  
What to dispute about Histories, which I cannot  
con-consult my self, and of which all my Know-  
nich ledge must be fetched from the Relations and  
ing Extracts of Travellers. My Business is only  
ong with *Greek* and *Latin* Writers; who are better  
refss known, and more easily examined. And as  
us<sup>b</sup>, *Phlegon* has no relation to the *Chinese* or de-  
ing pendance upon them, he may well enough be  
ers, taken separately from them, and may now be  
tin- introduced without further ceremony.

PHLEGON



# PHLEGON

Examined &c.

## I.

**P**HLEGON was born at *Tralles* a City of *Lydia*, and when he grew up became a *Libertus* or *Freedman* of the Emperor *Adrian*<sup>a</sup>. Some had reported, as *Suidas*<sup>b</sup> informs us, that he was a *Libertus* of the Emperor *Augustus*. But this was a great mistake, and has been fully disproved by Learned Men<sup>c</sup> from *Phlegon* himself. He was a Man much esteem'd for his Learning, and the Works which he published. Among other Pieces, of which there is a Catalogue and Critical Account in *Fabricius*<sup>d</sup>, he wrote one of more Note and Eminence than the rest, entitled, Ολυμπιακῶν ἔ Χρονικῶν συναγωγὴ<sup>e</sup>, or a *Chronological Account of the Victors at the Olympic Games, and of all the most remarkable Occurrences, which happened in every Olympiad, begin-*

<sup>a</sup> Spartian. in *Hadrian*. cap. 16. Vopiscus in *Saturnin*. cap. VII. Phot. Cod. 97.

<sup>b</sup> Suid. v. Φλέγον.

<sup>c</sup> Salmaf. in Spartian. *Hadrian*. cap. 16. Vossius. *Histor. Grec. Lib.* 2. c. 11.

<sup>d</sup> Fabric. *Biblioth. Græc.* L. IV. c. XII.

<sup>e</sup> Ap Phot. Cod. 97.

## His Age and Writings.

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ning with the 1st Olympiad, and continued down to the 229th, in sixteen Books<sup>f</sup>. This, if one may judge from the taste which *Photius* has given us of it, must have been a very useful and valuable Work, and of great service towards settling many Points in Antient Chronology. But unfortunately for us, these Books are not now extant, and nothing but a few Fragments (of which the Passage now in dispute is one) and notices of them remain, just enough to make us lament the irreparable loss of the rest. How long they were in being, before they were totally lost, cannot now (I think,) be determined with any certainty. We know they were extant in *Photius's* time, who lived in the Ninth Century, because he had them in his own hands, made considerable extracts out of them, and as he tells us himself<sup>g</sup>, had read, when he wrote his *Bibliotheca*, as far as the 177th Olympiad. It seems evident likewise from *Suidas*, that he too had seen them entire. For he tells us the number of Books in the whole Work, and in what Olympiad they end, and uses the word ἐστὶ of them as of Books then extant, without the least hint of their being lost either in whole or in part at that time.

<sup>f</sup> Εγγράψεν Ολυμπιάδας ἐν βιβλίῳ 16'. ἐστὶ δὲ μέχρι τῆς 229' Ολυμπιάδας τὰ προχθόνια παιγνῆ. *Suid.*

<sup>g</sup> Ubi supra.

Now

Now the Age of *Suidas*, which has so often been the subject of dispute among the Criticks, I would not pretend to fix exactly. But I am of opinion, that he compos'd his Lexicon in the latter end of the tenth Century or in the beginning of the eleventh, before A.D. 1025. For in one place<sup>h</sup> he speaks of *Basilus* and *Constantinus* as then reigning at *Constantinople*, who succeeded *Joannes Zimisces* in the Throne A.D. 975. and reigned together till the year 1025. I am sensible that some very Learned and Judicious Men *Gerard Vossius*<sup>i</sup> and *Fabricius*<sup>k</sup> have placed him in the latter end of the 11th Century. And *Fabricius* urges two Passages of *Suidas*\*, where *Michael Psellus* is quoted. That Author had dedicated<sup>l</sup> a Book (now extant in MS. in the King of France's Library) to *Michael Ducas* Son of *Constantine Ducas*, between the years 1071 and 1078. And this Book of his has the very words to which *Suidas* refers; and to make the Argument the stronger, these Passages are retained in the oldest Manuscripts of *Suidas*, that *Kuster* consulted. To all which I could add,

h Τῶν καυχόντων τὰ σκῆπτρα τῆς Βασιλείας Ρωμαίων Βασιλεῖς καὶ Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ Περφυρογεννῆται. Suidas v. Κωνσταντινούπολις.

i Voss. de Histor. Græc. Lib. 2. c. 26.

k Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. Tom. IX. p. 626.

\* Suidas v. Δέρτρα. v. Ηγήτορες.

l The Title of the Book in the MS. is, as follows. Φέλλας σόνουσις διὰ τῶν σαφῶν καὶ πολιτικῶν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν εὐσεβέστατον Βασιλέα κύριον Μιχαὴλ τὸν Δέκατον ἐν αὐτοῦ γράμματι τῷ Πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ Βασιλεως. Fabric. ubi sup. p. 625.

that

that *Suidas*<sup>m</sup> has transcribed a Passage *verbatim* from *Xiphiline*, who publish'd an Epitome of *Dion Cassius*. And this *Xiphiline* did not write before the year 1070. But upon considering the Evidence on both sides, the Chronological Passage above appears to me of the greatest weight. For this cannot easily be accounted for on any other supposition, but that *Suidas* himself was the Author of it. Whereas the other might be added by some later Writer, as we know several Passages certainly are. Another Argument in favour of my Hypothesis I may take from our most eminent Critick Dr. *Bentley*<sup>n</sup>. He observes, that *Suidas* calls *Symeon Metaphrastes* μακάριος of blessed memory, which appellation he believes is never used in Greek, but of Persons not long dead, and within the memory of him that says it. Now this *Symeon*, he says, was in Office under *Leo*, who died 58 years, before *Suidas*'s Chronology ends, and consequently flourish'd in the former part of the 10th Century. From whence it appears improbable, that *Suidas* should write above an hundred years after *Symeon*; as he must have done, if he liv'd towards A. D. 1100. For these reasons I chuse with Dr. *Cave*<sup>o</sup> and Dr. *Bentley* to place *Suidas* under the Emperors *Basilius* and *Constantinus*.

<sup>m</sup> *Suidas* v. *Απορί*.

<sup>n</sup> Dr. *Bentley*'s Dissertat. on *Phalaris*. p. 22, 23.

<sup>o</sup> *Cave* Hist. Literar. p. 587.

THUS far we may trace the Chronological Works of *Phlegon*; but how long they were preserv'd beyond this time, I know not, neither is it very material at present to enquire. It may suffice to have said so much in general of *Phlegon* and his Works, as may serve to prepare the way for what follows, and be of use in judging of some antient Authorities to be produced hereafter.

## II.

Now the Question between me and Dr. *Sykes* is manifestly this. *viz.* Whether that remarkable Eclipse, which is mentioned by *Phlegon* in a certain Fragment of his *Olympiads*, has any relation to the darkness, which happened at our Saviour's Passion. Dr. *Sykes* has thought fit to maintain the Negative. For the proof of which, one or other of these two things must be alledged. Either 1<sup>st</sup>. That the year of *Phlegon's* Eclipse, according to the common reading of his Text, does not coincide with the true year of our Saviour's Passion. Or 2<sup>d</sup>. That the present Text of *Phlegon* with regard to the year of his Eclipse is faulty in the common editions, and that another reading of it is certainly genuine. This alternative is admitted on all sides. Now the thing, upon which Dr. *S.* chuses to build his Hypothesis, is the 2<sup>d</sup> of the two abovementioned. He allows,



lows, that the year of *Phlegon's* Eclipse according to the common reading of the Text does really coincide with the true year of our Saviour's Passion; and declares moreover, that *were we sure, this was the true reading of Phlegon, there could be no dispute*. The reading therefore of *Phlegon* is what Dr. S. is pleased to dispute, and upon this alone he has rested the merits of the whole Controversy. Here then is the grand and necessary Point, which must now be debated; and if we can clearly and solidly vindicate the present reading of *Phlegon*, Dr. S. I am perswaded from his known Candor and Ingenuity, will own himself effectually confuted, and will *not be sorry to have this additional Testimony unquestionable*.

THE way, which I shall take to defend *Phlegon*, is that which is always made use of in these cases, and is such as all Criticks require and acquiesce in, being indeed the only one that can properly be made use of in disputes of this kind. It is to be remembered, that the Passage of *Phlegon* now before us, is only a small Fragment of a large and noble Work, which some antient Writers have preserv'd down to us. So that to know, what the Passage it self is, and what is the true and genuine reading of it, our business must be to

p Dissert. p. 48.

q Introduct. p. 6.

## 12 *Antient Testimonies.* Eusebius.

consult those antient Writers, and to examine, how it stands at present in them.

### III.

1. THE first Writer, that gives us the Passage in the *very words* (αὐτοῖς ῥήμασι) of *Phlegon*, is *Eusebius*<sup>r</sup>, and it runs thus. Τῷ δ. ἔτει τῆς σβ. Ολυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἑκλειψις ἡλίου μεγίστη ἣ ἐγνωρισμένων πρῶτον. Καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἕκτη τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥτε καὶ ἀστράς ἐν ἕραν φανῆναι. Σεισμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Νικαίας κατεσρέφατο. *In the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad there happened an Eclipse of the Sun the greatest that had been observ'd before, And there was Night at the sixth hour of the day, so that the Stars appeared in the Heavens. And (at the same time) a great Earthquake overthrew a great part of (the City) of Nice,* You see, this Eclipse and Earthquake mentioned by *Phlegon* is said to have happened in the *fourth* year of the 202d Olympiad, the very year in which *Dr. Sykes*<sup>f</sup> himself places the Passion of our Saviour Christ.

Now that δ. ἔτει is the true reading of *Phlegon* in *Eusebius*, is clear beyond all exception from the Latin Version of this Passage of *Eusebius* compos'd by *Jerom*<sup>t</sup>, and that of *Ana-*

<sup>r</sup> Apud Syncell. p. 325.

<sup>f</sup> Dissertat. p. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Quarto autem anno CCII. Olympiadis magna & excellens inter



## Kepler's *Exceptions Answer'd.* 13

*Basilius Bibliothecarius*<sup>u</sup> about the year 870. Both these Writers have *quarto anno* Olympiad. 202; and their Translations must be look'd upon as two distinct Originals, and not as if one was only a transcript from the other. For tho' they both translate the same Passage of *Eusebius*, yet their Translations of it are very different, as any one may see, that will but cast his eye upon them in the Margin. Add to this, that all the MSS. of *Syncellus*, which *Goar* consulted, agree in expressing the *Greek* numeral  $\delta$ .

THE Learned *Kepler* endeavouring to free his own Hypothesis from some difficulties arising from *Phlegon*, trifles exceedingly upon this Passage of *Eusebius*. When *Calvisius* objected to him *Jerom's quarto anno*, his answer<sup>w</sup> to him is, *But what if Jerom himself was mistaken? There is great room, says he, for suspecting, that the particle  $\delta$  was mistaken by him for the numeral letter  $\delta$ . Why so? Did Jerom know so*

*inter omnes, quæ ante eam acciderant, Defectio Solis facta; dies horâ sextâ ita in tenebrosam noctem versus, ut stellæ in cælo visæ sint, terræque motus in Bithyniâ Nicææ Urbis multas ades subverterit.* Hieron. Chron. Lat.

<sup>u</sup> Porro *quarto anno ducentesimæ secundæ Olympiadis facta est Defectio Solis maxima, & nox horâ sextâ Diei facta est, ita ut etiam stellæ in cælo apparerent. Terræ motus etiam magnus in Bithyniâ factus plurima Nicææ subvertit.* Anastas. Histor. Eccl. p. 14. Ed. Par.

<sup>w</sup> Hieronymus, inquis, vertit anno quarto? Quid igitur si & ipse est hallucinatus? Magna suspicio est voculam  $\delta$  pro numerali perperam sumptam. *Kepler*. Eclog. Chron. p. 87.

## 14 Kepler's *Exceptions Answer'd.*

little of *Greek*, as not to be able to distinguish one from the other? But the ground of this suspicion, it seems, is<sup>x</sup>, that *Jerom* read plainly not τῷ Δ' ἔτει, but τῷ δὲ Δ' ἔτει, as appears by his *quarto* autem anno. A notable Argument indeed! Because he read the particle δὲ in *Eusebius*, therefore he did not read also the numeral δ. Wonderful Logic this, and worthy so great a Philosopher! I should be glad to know from any Advocate for *Kepler* these two things.

1st. IF upon his supposition, there were no numeral δ. but only the particle δὲ in *Eusebius*, how *Jerom* came by his *autem* and *quarto* too? Surely he could not give us both *autem* and *quarto* for a Latin Translation of one single particle δ.

2. How *Jerom* can here be suspected of having mistaken δὲ for the numeral δ., when 'tis plain that in this very place he translates the particle δὲ by *autem*. What? could *Jerom* be right and wrong about the same particle at the same time? This to me is very strange and incredible.

BUT still the *Greek Text* of *Eusebius*, says *Kepler* y, is very ambiguous and uncertain. For

<sup>x</sup> Nam si ponderes verba Hieronymi, *Quarto* autem anno, plane constabit ipsum legisse non τῷ δ. ἔτει but τῷ δὲ δ. ἔτει. *Ibid.*

<sup>y</sup> Græcus *Eusebii* textus ambiguus est & lubricus. Nescias enim *Quarto* anno, an simpliciter, anno vero Olymp. CCII. legas. *Ibid.* p. 126.

## Kepler's *Exceptions Answer'd.* 15

you cannot tell, whether you ought to read it, in the fourth year, or, But in the year of the 202d Olympiad. Then, say I, there is no such thing as certainty in any Passage of *Eusebius*. And *Scaliger* might as well have saved himself the trouble of publishing an Edition of him. But pray what is it, that makes the *Greek Text* of *Eusebius* so ambiguous and uncertain? Are not *Syncellus* and *Jerom* and *Anastasius* sufficient to establish the  $\delta$ . and the *quarto* anno? And is there any Authority for  $\tau\omega \delta\epsilon \epsilon\tau\alpha$  without a numeral, besides a random conjecture? If bare suspicions can overthrow such weighty Authorities, neither *Eusebius*, nor the Canon of *Ptolemy*, nor any other Chronological Writer is safe.

BUT after all what is to be done with plain  $\tau\omega \delta\epsilon \epsilon\tau\alpha$ , when the numeral  $\delta$ . is struck out? Why, it seems, it is to signify the year when the 202d Olympiad was celebrated, or the first year of that Olympiad. I answer, that the ancient *Greeks* never speak in this manner. They always insert a numeral to express the first year of an Olympiad, as well as any other. And therefore Dr. *Sykes* perceiving that *Kepler* was in some distress, endeavours to help him out by an easy solution of his own. If *Phlegon*, says he, designed the Eclipse in the first year of the 202d Olympiad, the *Greek Text* of *Eusebius* is to be corrected by the smallest alteration possible in the *Greek numbers*, by putting an A instead

stead of a  $\Delta^z$ . Very true, if Phlegon designed any such thing. But how does it appear, that he did so? Till that be shewn, let us keep the numeral  $\Delta$  which is antient and well attested, rather than admit another which has no foundation in Antiquity.

II. To confirm the quotation of Eusebius, the *Chronicon Paschale* otherwise called the *Chronicon Alexandrinum* cites Phlegon twice in the same form, introducing him with saying, That the Pagans had taken notice of this year, (the year of the Passion) mentioning expressly an Earthquake as happening at the time, and particularly Phlegon the Collector of Olympiads. For in his XIIIth Book he says thus. In the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad there happened an Eclipse of the Sun, the greatest of any known before<sup>a</sup> &c. We may observe here, how emphatically this Author speaks of Phlegon, and

z Differtat. p. 73, 74.

a Kai oi ἔλαβον δὲ τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν τοῦτον ἐπισημήσαντο, ἀσφαλῶς ἐκ ποντοῦ καὶ τὸν σεισμόν γινόμενον, καὶ κατ' ἐξαίρετον Φλέγων ὁ τὰς Ὀλυμπιάδας συναγαγών. Λέγει γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἑγ' συγγραμμάτων, οὕτως. Τῷ δὲ ΤΕΤΑΡΤῳ ἔτει τῆς σθ'. Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἐκλείψις Ἡλίου μεγίστη ἢ ἐγνωσμένων πρότερον. Καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἑκτὴ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥπ καὶ ἀστέραι ἐν οὐρανῷ φανήσαντες. Σεισμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γινόμενος. ΤΑΥΤΑ Ο ΔΗΛΩΘΕΙΣ ΑΝΗΡ, γινούς τὸ παράδοξον τῆς ἐκλείψεως τῆς Ἡλίου. Chron. Paschal. p. 219.

Ο παρὰ τοῖς ἑλλήσι χρονογράφοις ἰστένησι Φλέγων, ὁ τὰς Ὀλυμπιάδας τελεικώς, λεγών. Τῷ δὲ ΤΕΤΑΡΤῳ ἔτει τῆς σθ'. Ὀλυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἐκλείψις Ἡλίου μεγίστη ἢ ἐγνωσμένων πρότερον· καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἑκτὴ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε ἑ ἀστέραι ἐν οὐρανῷ φανήσαντες· σεσμός τε μέγας κατὰ Βιθυνίαν γινόμενος τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Νικαίας κατεστρέψατο. Ταῦτα δὲ δηλωθεὶς ἀνὴρ. Ibid. p. 222. Ed. Cang.



how little room there is to doubt, that he transcribed these words of *Phlegon* from *Phlegon* himself. And what is farther remarkable, he expresses in both places the *fourth* year not by the numeral  $\Delta$  but by τετάρτῳ at length, which makes any mistake in the number less easy and less probable. *His repetition likewise of the same words*, as an ingenious Writer has well observed <sup>b</sup>, *must be look'd upon as a confirmation of the Authority, tho' in the same Book, because it shews, that in the first Text there was no accidental mistake.*

I must farther observe to the Reader, that these Testimonies of the *Chronicon Paschale* are probably much more antient, than they are commonly supposed and represented. The generality of Writers thrust down this *Chronicon* in gross without any distinction as low as the 7th Century. Whereas we are informed by the last Learned Editor of it *Dufresne* <sup>c</sup>, that it is really made up of two parts, composed by different Authors at different times. The first begins with *Adam* and ends A. D. 354. in the XVIIth of the Emperor *Constantius*, the second continues it down from that year, to the XXth of the Emperor *Heraclius* A. D. 630. And this discovery of *Dufresne* is confirmed by the great *Fabricius* <sup>d</sup>. Now the Te-

<sup>b</sup> Letter to Dr. Sykes p. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Præfat. ad Chron. Paschal. p. VIII.

<sup>d</sup> Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. Tom. VI. p. 142.

testimonies cited above from the *Chronicon* are extant in the former part of it, and consequently are not to be placed lower than A. D. 354, a few years after *Eusebius*. These circumstances of the *Chronicon Paschale* lead me to wonder, why Dr. Sykes, who professes<sup>e</sup> to have collected and faithfully represented to the Reader the principal if not all the Passages, which relate to Phlegon's Testimony, among the Antients, should pass this over without the least notice in his *Dissertation*. For is not this one of the *Principals* the Doctor talks of? or, was he not apprized of such a Book? or, could he wilfully omit it, as being so strong and express against him? or, what was the reason of it? For my part I will not pretend to determine; the Doctor is the only Person that can explain it.

III. A 3d Writer among the *Greeks*, that has quoted the same Passage of *Phlegon* is *Joannes Philoponus*<sup>f</sup>, who flourish'd about the year 600. He too with the Authors produced above appears very plainly to have read in *Phlegon* τετάρτη ἔτη the *fourth* year of Ol. 202. For so he has

<sup>e</sup> Introduct. to Dissert. p. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Τέτα δὲ τοῦ σκότους, μάλλον δὲ τῆς νυκτὸς ταύτης, καὶ Φλέγων ἐν ταῖς Ολυμπιάσιν ἐμνήσθη. Λέγει γὰρ, ὅτι τῇ δευτέρῃ ἔτῃ τῆς διακοσμοῦς δευτέρας Ολυμπιάδος, ἐγένετο ἡλὶς ἐκλειψις μεγίστη ἢ ὅση (dele. ὅση) ἰγνασμένων ἀστέρων· καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἕκτῃ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐγένετο, ὥστε εἰς αἰθέρας ἐν ὄρανι φάνηται. *Philoponus* in *Genesin*, Lib. II, cap. 21. p. 88.

# *Historia Miscella.* Freculphus. 19

it expressly in one place<sup>g</sup>, putting τετάρτῳ at length, and forming a Chronological Calculation upon it. It is true, that in the first Passage quoted in the Margin, we find δευτέρῳ according to the present Edition of him, but I shall prove below from *Philoponus* himself, that this reading is only a corruption in his Copy.

THESE are all the antient *Greeks*, who have quoted professedly the original words of *Phlegon* \*. But besides these of the *Greeks*, and *Jerom* and *Anastasius* of the *Latins* produced above, I may subjoin two more *Latin* Writers, the Author of the *Historia Miscella* about the year 784<sup>i</sup>, and *Freculphus Lexoviensis*<sup>k</sup> about 824. Both these have cited *Phlegon* in their Histories, and both express in their Translations of his words the *fourth* year of Olympiad 202. Upon all which Testimonies I shall make a

<sup>g</sup> Τὴν δὲ ἔκλειψιν (φασὶν ὁ Φλέγων) γερμέναι ἐν τῷ ΤΕΤΑΡΤῳ ἔτῳ τῆς διακοσσοῦς δευτέρας Ολυμπιάδος. Id. ibid p. 89.

\* I take no notice of *Malela* and *Maximus*, because though they both quote *Phlegon*, yet they do it negligently, and not in the words of *Phlegon* himself.

<sup>i</sup> Scribens inter cæteros autem & *Phlegon* — in tertio decimo sermone iisdem verbis asserit hæc. Porro quarto anno ducentesima secundæ Olympiadis facta est defectio Solis maxima, & nox horâ sextâ diei facta est : ita ut etiam stellæ in cælo apparerent. Terræ motus etiam magnus in Bithyniâ factus plurimam Nicææ partem urbis subvertit. *Histor. Miscell. Lib. VII. p. 227.*

<sup>k</sup> Scribit verò super his & *Phlegon*, qui Olympiadum egregius suoputator est, in XIII Libro ita dicens; Quarto autem anno CCII Olympiadis, magna & excellens inter omnes, qui ante eam acciderant, defectio Solis facta est diei horâ sextâ &c. *Freculph. Chron. Tom. II. Lib. I. c. 6.*



few Remarks, before I proceed to consider Dr. Sykes's Objections.

1st. It is proper to observe, that all these *Greek* and *Latin* Writers, that quote and translate this Passage of *Phlegon*, lived while the Works of *Phlegon* were yet in being. For they all flourished before the 10th Century, till which time I have shewn above, that *Phlegon's* Works were extant. From whence it is plain, that all these ancient Testimonies may be called *original* ones, that is, such as might have been taken from *Phlegon* himself; and therefore must not be discredited as mere *transcripts* of one Author from another, because these Writers were all Men of Learning, and capable of consulting that Author, and no one can prove, that they did not in fact consult him. I am aware of one Objection to some of the *Latins*, that their Translations are almost the same *verbatim*, and therefore that they only copied one from another without ever looking into *Phlegon*. This perhaps may be said of *Anastasius* and *Freculphus*, the first following the Author of *Historia Miscella* or *Paulus Warnefridus*, and the other *Jerom*. But this sort of Argument (though frequently made use of) does not seem to me very solid and conclusive. For why is it necessary that a Man should not have seen the Original of an Author, because he cites another's Translation of him? Might he not quote a *Latin* Translation  
in

Dr. in a particular Passage, because he found it very just and agreeable to the Original? And is not this done by the most learned and accurate *Moderns*, who cannot justly be suspected either of negligence or incapacity? And as to these two Writers in particular, *Anastasius* is known to have been a Scholar, *Vir erat*, says Dr. Cave, *pro ævi sui genio nequaquam indoctus; qui utriusque linguæ scientiam tenuit, & cum primariis Sæculi Viris, Photio ac Hincmaro, arctam satis amicitiam coluit*<sup>1</sup>. Besides which, he was qualified sufficiently by his Office of *Bibliothecarius* or *Library-Keeper* at *Rome* for a curious and diligent search after Books, and very probably was prefer'd to that Office for his extraordinary abilities in point of Literature. And as to *Freculphus*, he too was a Man of eminence in the Western Church, and moreover assures us himself, that the Passages, which he quotes by name from antient Writers whether Profane or Ecclesiastical, are represented by him as he found them in the Authors themselves; *Sententias illorum*, says he, *assumpsi, ut in suis habentur libris*<sup>m</sup>. If so, it is certainly not improbable, that he consulted *Phlegon* himself, tho' in his *Latin* History he has adopted *Jerom's* Translation of one Passage of him.

2. I would observe, that here are no less than seven antient Writers three *Greek* and

<sup>1</sup> Cave. *Histor. Liter.* Tom. I. p. 559.

<sup>m</sup> *Freculp. Præf. Chron.*

four *Latin*, all concurring in one uniform representation of a Fragment of *Phlegon*, and in one reading of a controverted numeral. A number very extraordinary, and of great weight in the present case! There is not, I believe, one antient *Chronological* Fragment in a hundred (of those which are now extant) so well attested and supported as this of *Phlegon*. Few there are among the many hundreds, that may now be collected from *Greek* Antiquity Profane and Ecclesiastical, that have more than one Writer to rest upon; a great majority of them depend upon a single evidence; and Men of Learning will, I dare say, think I speak too much within compass, when I call this Fragment of *Phlegon* thus confirmed and illustrated only one of a hundred. Now 'tis plain and indisputable fact, that *Chronological* Fragments of much inferior Authority as to Evidence, many that are quoted but by one Writer and that but once, others not supported by more than two or three, are often alledged by Men of the greatest erudition and skill in Criticism, to prove and settle many important points in antient History. And that even in those, which abound with numerals much more than this of *Phlegon*, and even in opposition to the Testimonies of other antient Authors, who are still preserved entire and unquestionable. Instances of this, were it necessary to be proved, would fill a volume. Now

if Fragments of this kind meet with so much regard from the Learned, if they carry so great an Authority with them, and are esteemed of so signal use and consequence to the Critical World, surely this Fragment of *Phlegon*, surrounded with so glaring an Evidence, must deserve an equal if not vastly greater regard, from every candid and judicious Critick. Or on the other side, if so bright an Evidence cannot secure the Text of this Fragment of *Phlegon*, sure I am, that we may e'en set aside many hundreds of valuable Fragments, which are now in repute, and reject many noble conclusions that are formed upon them.

3. It is a maxim in Criticism generally received and allowed, that where the very words of an Author are expressly and professedly laid down in any antient Writer, such Copy or Representation of them is to be followed, rather than any loose and general account of them in others. Thus in the case before us, when *Eusebius*, the *Chronicon Paschale*, and *Philoponus* declare that such and such are the very words of *Phlegon*, we ought not to set up in opposition to them the loose and imperfect citations in *Africanus*, or *Malelas*, or *Maximus*. And the reason is plain, because there is manifestly much greater evidence from the former concerning *Phlegon's* original words, than from the latter.



4. As we are furnished from the Writers abovementioned with such direct and positive proof of *Phlegon's* words, such as very rarely attends any Fragment of Antiquity, mere conjectures, surmises, and suspicions are of no sort of weight and significancy. For if these were allowed to overthrow such clear and explicit Authorities, the Criticks would find it very difficult, if not utterly impossible, to secure the Text of any ancient Author from cavil and exception.

## IV.

HAVING said thus much by way of Preliminary Remark, I come now to consider what Dr. *Sykes* has objected to our present reading of *Phlegon*. And here one would naturally expect to see our quotations of *Phlegon* confronted with others as full and express, bearing plainly very different Years or Olympiads, and of much superior Authority. But natural as it is to expect something of this kind, Dr. *S.* intends no such thing; his Evidence is chiefly of the presumptive and conjectural kind, not positive and direct; and his Authors say little themselves, but are taught to speak by his sagacious Interpretations of them.

Dr. *Sykes*<sup>n</sup> begins with producing *Julius Africanus*, who in a Fragment of his preserv'd

<sup>n</sup> Dissertat. p. 12.

by Syncellus speaks thus. Phlegon tells us, that in the Reign of Tiberius Cæsar, (at full Moon) there was a total Eclipse of the Sun from the sixth hour (to the ninth.) 'Tis plain he speaks of this<sup>o</sup>. (of the darkness at the Passion.) The Reader, I dare say, does not discern immediately, how Julius Africanus here is repugnant with Eusebius and the others above. Africanus says, Phlegon tells us of a total Eclipse in the Reign of Tiberius, and Phlegon in Eusebius says the same. Africanus mentions no particular year of Tiberius's Reign or Olympiad, therefore Africanus says nothing against the 4th year of Olymp. 202. in Eusebius. But still Africanus is against Eusebius, for as the Doctor argues<sup>p</sup>, tho' Africanus has not named the year, yet by his application of Phlegon's Eclipse to the death of Christ, 'tis plain he supposed it to be in the same year. And if<sup>q</sup> Phlegon's Eclipse was the same time of the year, that Africanus conceiv'd the death of Christ to be in, 'tis evident, he must suppose it to have been in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, i. e. it must have been not in the 4th year of the 202d Olympiad, but in the 4th year of the 201st. So that it seems Africanus does certainly contradict Eusebius, tho' not in express words, yet by a necessary consequence. In the same manner had

ο Φλέγων ἱστορεῖ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἐν Πανσέληνῳ ἔκλειψιν ἡλίου  
 γεγενῆσθαι τελείαν ἀπὸ ὥρας ἑκτῆς μέχρις ἑνάτης. Διόλου ὡς πρῶτον.

African. ap. Syncell. p. 322.

p Dissert. p. 15.

q Ibid. p. 17.

the Learned *Basnage*<sup>r</sup> argued upon this Subject. But really to me both Dr. Sykes and *Basnage* seem to have drawn conclusions, which are very illogical and precarious. For if any other good reasons can be assigned of this application of *Phlegon* by *Africanus*, besides that which the Doctor has given, then his cannot be prov'd to be the only true and necessary one, and it will not, I think, appear indisputable from thence, that *Africanus*'s reading of *Phlegon* was different from that of *Eusebius*. Now I say, and may reasonably suppose, that *Africanus* might apply *Phlegon* in this manner, either by mistake, for want of comparing critically the Olympiads with the years of *Tiberius*: Or because he might imagine that *Phlegon* himself was mistaken in the year, as living so long after the time. It was therefore judiciously urged against Dr. S. by the Author of the Letter<sup>s</sup>, that *the whole weight of this Argument or rather Conjecture rests upon the supposed accuracy of those Fathers*; whereas *they might easily have fallen into mistake, if in this case they made no nice Chronological comparison betwixt the years of the Olympiads and those of Tiberius's Reign*. Which, says he addressing himself particularly to Dr. Sykes, *cannot surely seem strange to you, who are so ready, whenever it serves your turn, to give up the accuracy as well as honesty of*

<sup>r</sup> *Basnag* Annal. Politic. Ecclesiast. Tom. I. p. 245, 248.

<sup>s</sup> Letter to Dr. Sykes p. 21, 22,



*these pious Authors.* It is indeed a most fallacious and dangerous rule in Criticism, to correct the Text of Writers by a Reader's application of it; and that against the Authority of Manuscripts, and the plainest quotations. For then every Blunder and Hallucination of a Reader, whatever be the cause of it, whether Inadvertency, Forgetfulness, or Misapprehension, will furnish out a new Text, and the genuine will be utterly lost in a monstrous variety of glosses and corruptions. But to shew the weakness and extravagancy of such sort of reasoning, let us only try it on some other Books, and see how it will hold in them. *Josephus*, says *Eusebius* in his *Chronicon*<sup>†</sup>, relates, that *about the time* of *Christ's Passion* the Jewish Priests upon the day of Pentecost heard voices crying out from the innermost part of the Temple, *Let us depart hence*. Therefore to argue in Dr. *Sykes's* way, all the present Editions of *Josephus*<sup>‡</sup> are very faulty and ought to be corrected; for they place this Story in the last destruction of *Jerusalem*, thirty years at least after the Passion. Again. Many ancient Writers fix the Passion of Christ upon Scripture Authority in the 15th of *Tiberius*. Therefore they could not have read in St. *John*

† Κατὰ τὰς αὐτὰς δὲ χρόνους ἸΩΣΗΠΟΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΕΙ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ Πεντηκοστῆς, κινήσεως καὶ κλύου ἱερίας ἀνπλαμυνάμενός τε πρώτον, ἔπειτα Φωνῆς ἀθρόας ἐνδοθεν ἀκηθῆσαι ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ αὐτοῖς ῥήμασιν εἰπόμενης, Μεταβαίωμεν ἔντευθεν. Euseb. Chron. Græc. p. 188. Ed. Scal.

‡ Josephus Bell. Jud. Lib. 6. cap. V. Ed. Haverc.

such a number of Passovers after the Baptism, as we do at present; and consequently these 3 or 4 Passovers must be judged to be mere corruptions and late interpolations of that Gospel. Such conclusions as these, I hope, Dr. Sykes himself would not be willing to allow; and yet these and many others of the same kind would be just and irrefragable, if Dr. Sykes's Argument from *Africanus* must be admitted as very sound and indisputable. Indeed if this sort of *Critique* were to prevail universally in the Learned World, wretched and lamentable would be the fate of ancient *Greek* and *Latin* Books. And such it had been at the first Restoration of Letters, if rules of this kind had been followed then. But the *Stephens's*<sup>w</sup>, the *Scaligers*<sup>x</sup>, and *Casaubons*<sup>y</sup> were wise enough to resolve misapplications of Authors into oversight and inaccuracy, to which all Men they knew were very subject, and the greatest among the Antients in particular. Nay even the *Moderns* themselves, and they of the first rank have been guilty of great mistakes in plainer cases than this of *Africanus*. *Joseph*

<sup>w</sup> Henric. Steph. Præf. Observ. in *Æschyl*.

<sup>x</sup> Jos. Scal. Prolegom. in Euseb. & Animadvers. in Euseb. p. 171, 172.

<sup>y</sup> H. Casaub. Animadvers. in Athen. Lib. IV. c. XIX. & alibi passim.

Familiaria veteribus *μνημονὸν ἀμαρτήματα*, qualia non modo *Galenum*, *Maximum Tyrium*, atque alios, sed disertissimum etiam Romuli Nepotum admisisse advertit Henricus Stephanus, ac *Critici* passim. Octav. Falconer, de Nummo Apamensi.

Scaliger in his Animadversions<sup>z</sup> on Eusebius reports from Julius Capitolinus, That Flavia Tiberiana the Wife of Pertinax bore the title of Augusta, in direct contradiction (as he thought) to Dion Cassius, who affirms, that he would neither allow the title of Augusta to his Wife, nor of Caesar to his Son. Upon which he cries out, *Cui melius credetur, quam Dioni ipsi qui interfuit?* But 'tis Scaliger himself that sets Dion and Julius Capitolinus at variance, for want of considering carefully what Capitolinus had related. That Author, tho' he does indeed say, that these Titles were offer'd by the Roman Senate, yet in the very Life of Pertinax, to which Scaliger refers, tells us in clear and express words, that *Pertinax nec uxoris Augustæ appellationem recepit, & de Filio dixit, cum meruerit*<sup>a</sup>. And so the great Isaac Casaubon<sup>b</sup> very rightly understood him. Is not this now as strange a mistake, as that which Africanus is supposed to have committed? Once more. The same Scaliger<sup>c</sup> in his Greek Ολυμπιάδων ἀναγραφή quotes the words of a Scholiast on Pindar, to shew that the custom of running at the Olympick Games with a Chariot drawn

<sup>z</sup> Jos. Scalig. in Euseb. p. 208.

<sup>a</sup> Jul. Capitolin. Vit. Pertinac. Tom. I. Histor. August. p. 342. Ed. Var.

<sup>b</sup> Decreto Senatûs Augusta est appellata; sed eum honorem ab eâ recipi noluit Pertinax, ut mox subjicitur, & pluribus Dio. Casaub. Annot. in Vit. Pertinac. c. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Scalig. ad Olymp. LXXIX.

by Mules was left off about Olymp. 79. Whereas that Scholiast says<sup>d</sup> expressly in words at length, that it was left off about Olymp. 89. Here now is a difference of just ten years between *Scaliger* and his Author the Scholiast. And what must be done in this case? Must we change the common reading of the Scholiast ὀγδοηκοστήν into ἐβδομηκοστήν to compliment *Scaliger*? Dr. *Bentley*<sup>e</sup> was quite of another opinion, and pronounces the *great Scaliger careless* in his application of the Scholiast, nay gives us other instances<sup>f</sup> of such misquotations in him, and tells us, that *such oversights are not infrequent in that Collection of his*. In truth, *such oversights*, as *Valesius*<sup>g</sup> well observed, are discoverable in Men of the greatest Learning; and there is too much reason for saying with *Isaac Vossius*<sup>h</sup>, *Vide quanti errores à magnis saepe committuntur Viris!*

THUS then may we account for *Africanus's* application of *Phlegon* from mere inadvertency and inaccuracy; and this might happen the more

<sup>d</sup> Εἰς τὸ μὲν ἵπποις ἀγωνίζεσθαι, Ἀσάνδρατος (Bentleio Θεσσαυδρός πε) ἐπιτέδυσσε καὶ ἡμίονοις ἀγωνίζεσθαι. Χρόνῳ δὲ πε οὐ μακρὸς, ἀλλὰ δεκαετής (Bentl. δωδεκαετής) πύτο διέλυσε. Διελύθη γὰρ αὖτὴ τὴν ΟΓΔΟΗΚΟΣΤΗΝ ἐν ἅτῳ Ολυμπιάδα. Schol. in Pindar. Olymp. V.

<sup>e</sup> Dr. *Bentley's* Dissertat. upon Phalaris. p. 197.

<sup>f</sup> See *ibid.* p. 215, 283.

<sup>g</sup> Hujusmodi errata obrepere plerumque solent etiam Doctissimis Hominibus, non tam memoriæ vitio, quam per imprudentiam, dum minimè advertunt quæ dicuntur. Henric. Vales. in Ammian. Marcell. Lib. 23. c. 1.

<sup>h</sup> *Is. Voss. Observat. in Catull. p. 82.*



easily, as the case it self gave room for a slip in *Africanus*. The coincidence of the Olympiads with the years of *Tiberius* could not be adjusted exactly, without much care and nice calculations. Several circumstances were to be consider'd and compar'd together, before the one could be made a plain Index to the other. And a casual omission of any one of these might make a difference in the account of 3 or 4 years. So that the supposition of an error here is not at all unreasonable.

BUT perhaps after all, *Africanus* himself might not be guilty of any negligence and oversight; he might discern well enough the disagreement in time between *Phlegon's* Eclipse, and the darkness at the Passion, but might attribute it to some mistake in *Phlegon* or his Author. He might judge from the *circumstances* of that Eclipse, that it really was the same with the other darkness, but might imagine that *Phlegon* or his Author had placed it in the wrong year. And to shew that this second solution of the matter is no more improbable than the former, I will give a clear Instance of it from another Writer in this very case about *Phlegon*. The Author of the *Historia Miscella* places the Passion in the 17th (in one MS. of *Canisius* 18th) year of *Tiberius*, and yet he applies *Phlegon's* Eclipse of Olymp. 202. 4. and those of other *Greek* Writers to the darkness at the Passion, declaring moreover, that he  
makes



makes this application of them, *notwithstanding they relate such events as happening in the 19th year of Tiberius, Quamquam nonodecimo anno Tiberii hæc facta referuntur*<sup>i</sup>. Now why might not *Africanus* take the same liberty in his application of *Phlegon*, as this *Latin* Historian does? The latter, 'tis plain, neglected the Chronological Characters of *Phlegon* and the other *Greeks*, and why is it impossible, that *Africanus* should do so too?

THESE suppositions will still appear more easy and probable, if it be consider'd farther, that the difference between *Africanus* and *Phlegon* with respect to the Olympiads is not really so great as Dr. S. would perswade us. For *Africanus* placed the Passion of Christ in the second year of Ol. 202, not in the fourth year of Ol. 201; as Dr. S. had represented him. This is evident from *Africanus's* own words in *Eusebius*<sup>k</sup>, *Jerom*<sup>l</sup>, and *Syncellus*<sup>m</sup>, who all agree in expressing the same year. So that the difference between the two Writers in the Olympiads is only 2 not 4 years. If it be re-

i Histor. Miscell. Lib. VII. p. 225. ed. 1603.

k *Ἐπὶ ταῖς τὸν χρόνον, δὲ ἢν Ὀλυμπιάδας διαχρονισθῆς ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑΣ ἔτ' ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΝ, Τίτου δὲ Καίσαρος ἡγεμονίας ἔτ' ΕΚΚΑΙΔΕΚΑΤΟΝ. κ. τ. λ. African. ap. Euseb. Dem. Evang. Lib. VIII. p. 390.*

l *Usque ad ducentessimam secundam Olympiadem, & secundum ejusdem Olympiadis annum, Tiberii Caesaris annum quintum decimum &c. Id. ap. Hieron. Comm. in Dan. cap. IX.*

m *African. ap. Syncell. p. 323.*

plied, as Dr. S. has suggested<sup>n</sup>, that *Africanus* placed the Passion in the 15th of *Tiberius*, and consequently in the 1st of Ol. 202. I answer, that this is neither certain, nor very material. It is not certain, because tho' *Ferom* in a Passage of *Africanus* has *annum Tiberii Caesaris quintum decimum*, yet *Eusebius*<sup>o</sup> before him and *Syn-cellus*<sup>p</sup> after him have both ἔτος ἐκχριστιανισμοῦ at length. And if it be *certain* according to Dr. Sykes<sup>q</sup>, that *Africanus* was of opinion, that Christ Preached one year after his Baptism, it must be *certain*, that *Eusebius's* reading of *Africanus* is the true one. For as Christ was Baptized in the Spring not long before the Jewish Passover in the 15th of *Tiberius*, one year more of his publick Ministry will bring his Passion into the next Spring, and the 16th of *Tiberius*.

BUT neither is this objection very material. For *Africanus* might place the 15th of *Tiberius* in Ol. 202. 2. tho' other Chronologers may fix it to Ol. 202. 1. or 201. 4. It is manifest, that antient Authors differ very much, in adjusting the Olympiads, to the Reigns of the *Ptolemies*, *Seleucide*, Roman Emperors, &c. and therefore *Africanus* in adjusting the *Olympiads* to the years of *Tiberius* might have a pe-

<sup>n</sup> Dissertat. p. 17.

<sup>o</sup> Ubi supra.

<sup>p</sup> Ubi supra.

<sup>q</sup> Dissert. p. 17.

culiar way of reckoning too \*. Besides with regard to *Phlegon*, the only Chronological Character of his Eclipse was the 4th year of Ol. 202. He had not mentioned the particular year of *Tiberius*, in which it happened; and therefore *Africanus* in his application of *Phlegon* might only regard the *Olympiad* to which he fixed it.

FROM what has been said then, I hope, it is sufficiently clear, that Dr. *Sykes's* argument drawn from *Africanus* against the present reading of *Phlegon*, is very far from being conclusive. We have seen, that *Africanus* did not place the Crucifixion of our Saviour in Ol. 201. 4. but in Ol. 202. 2. And if he had done so, he might notwithstanding that have read in *Phlegon* Ol. 202. 4. and apply his Eclipse to the darkness at the Passion.

NOTHING now remains to be explained in *Africanus*, but his loose and irregular Representation of *Phlegon's* words. He seems at first sight to intimate in the Passage cited above, that *Phlegon* had mentioned the full Moon (ὡς Πανσελήνης) as the particular time of his Eclipse, and had lengthened out the duration of it from

\* I am not ignorant, that two very Learned Men, Pagi (Critic. in Baron. Tom. 1. p. 27.) and Bauldri, (Annotat. in Lactant. de Mort. Persec. p. 22.) have asserted, that *Africanus* in his supputation of the Olympiads outruns the common way of reckoning them 2 years, and that constantly. But I freely acknowledge, that I am not convinced of the truth of this Hypothesis, and I think, were this a proper place, I could disprove it from *Africanus* himself.

the sixth hour to the ninth. Now it is plain from *Eusebius* and others, who give us the very words of *Phlegon* himself, that *Phlegon* said nothing of the full Moon, or the ninth hour. The Question therefore is, how any such words should appear in *Africanus*. Mr. *Whiston* suspects, that they are later interpolations, crept out of the Margin into the Text, and not the words of *Africanus* himself. The conjecture, I must own, is not without grounds, and may be reasonably admitted notwithstanding the violent remonstrances of Dr. *Sykes* against it. For it seems to me a little strange, that *Eusebius*, who was so well acquainted with the works of *Africanus*, should take not the least notice of so remarkable an expression as ἐν Πανσελήνῳ, if it had been extant at that time in *Africanus*, and represented by him as the words of *Phlegon*. Neither are the MSS. of *Syncellus*, upon which Dr. *S.* so vehemently insists, of such overruling Authority, as to silence and overthrow all conjectures of this kind. For corruptions might have crept into the Copies of *Africanus*, before *Syncellus* himself wrote his Chronicon, the distance between these two writers being no less than six hundred years. However I must confess, that all this is little more than a private conjecture,

† Testimony of *Phlegon* Vindicated. p. 29.

‡ Def. p. 20, 22.



which I would not insist upon as evident proof.

BUT if this solution of the difficulty does not please Dr. Sykes, the Author of the *Letter* will furnish us with 'another. He thinks, that *Africanus*, who does not pretend to give an exact Copy of Phlegon's words, but speaks from memory only, finding the darkness at the Passion to have happened at full Moon, and being thoroughly persuaded, that Phlegon's Eclipse was the same the Evangelists describe, supposes that Phlegon said the Eclipse happened at full Moon, and lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour<sup>u</sup>. This is both candid and ingenious; and shews less prejudice and partiality, than invidious insinuations, that *Africanus* with the other Men of the second and third Centuries had a scurvy trick of Lying for God's sake<sup>w</sup>. For why must every little misquotation of the Antients be resolved immediately into Fraud and Dishonesty, when other more favourable Accounts may be given of them? Dr. Sykes has no proof for his suggestion against *Africanus*; where then is the charity of blasting his Credit without any? The very turn and form of *Africanus's* expression gives us room to imagine, that he quoted *Phlegon* by memory only, and perhaps many years after he had read the Passage of *Phlegon*. And such misquotations of Authors are frequently

<sup>u</sup> Letter to Dr. Sykes. p. 8, 25.

<sup>w</sup> Dr. Sykes's Def. p. 21.



to be seen in the best antient Writers, and are attributed by Men of candour and judgment to inaccuracy and forgetfulness<sup>x</sup>.

BUT to make as compleat an Apology for *Africanus* as I can, I would offer one consideration more in his favour, which is this; The words ἐν Πανσελήνῳ and μεχρὲς ἐνάτης might be inserted by *Africanus* not as the words of *Phlegon* himself, but as his own interpretation of them. I will explain, what I mean, by putting the whole Passage in *English*, just as I suppose *Africanus* might intend it in the *Greek*. *Phlegon tells us, that in the Reign of Tiberius Cæsar (at full Moon) there was a total Eclipse of the Sun from the sixth hour (to the ninth.)* Here now by the difference of Character, and the Brackets inclosing them, the words *at full Moon* and *to the ninth* are easily discerned to be *Africanus's* own, added to interpret *Phlegon*, as he understood him to mean. And such interpretative additions are to be seen every day in our *English* Books, and cannot well be mistaken. But antiently among the *Greeks*, though such insertions as these were very frequent in their Writings, yet they were not so cautiously distinguished in the Manuscripts; which has occasioned abundance of mistakes among Learned Interpreters. This observation it may not be improper to illustrate by a few instances

<sup>x</sup> Vid. If. Casaub. in Athen. Lib. I. cap. xiiii. Lib. II. cap. xx.

from Antiquity. *Eusebius* in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*<sup>y</sup> quotes the following Passage from *Josephus*. Τὴν δὲ Βασιλείαν Ηρώδης παρὰ Ρωμαίων ἐσχειροθεῖς, οὐκ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκ τῆ Ἀσσυριαῖς γένους, ἔσθι δὲ ἦσαν οἱ χαλάρμοι Μακκαδαῖοι, κατήστησαν ἀρχιερεῖς, ἀλλὰ πῶς ἀσήμες καὶ μόνον ἐξ Εβραίων ὄντας πλὴν ἐνὸς Αἰσχροβόλου. κ. τ. λ. These words appear in *Eusebius*, as if they all belonged to the Jewish Historian, being introduced with Ἰωσήπος ὡς πῶς ἱστορεῖται, and continued in the same character and form without the least distinction. Notwithstanding which, there is one sentence ἔσθι δὲ ἦσαν οἱ χαλάρμοι Μακκαδαῖοι, inserted by *Eusebius* himself, as his own interpretation of the τῆ Ἀσσυριαῖς γένους in *Josephus*. And accordingly we find, that this sentence is wanting in all the present Copies of that Writer<sup>z</sup>. Again. *Suidas* speaking of that old Greek Proverb, Κοινὰ τὰ τῷ φίλῳ, says that *Menander* uses it in his Play called *Ἀδελφοί*; and then adds, ἐ δὴ πῶς τὰ χρήματα ΛΕΓΩΝ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν τῆ νῦ καὶ τῆς φρονήσεως κοινωνίαν. Now here one might be apt to imagine from *Suidas*'s λέγων, that these last words were taken from the Poet *Menander*, and the excellent *Grotius*<sup>a</sup> under this persuasion digested them into Iambics :

<sup>y</sup> Lib. VIII. p. 397.

<sup>z</sup> Vid. *Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XX. cap. X. Ed. Haverc.*

<sup>a</sup> *Grot. Excerpt. p. 708.*

Τὰ τῷ φίλων κοῖν', ὃ μόνον τὰ χρήματα.  
Καὶ νῦν δὲ καὶ φρονήσεως κοινωνία.

In which mistake he was followed afterwards by Mr. *Le Clerc*<sup>b</sup>. But the acute *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*<sup>c</sup> proved clearly enough, that τὴν τῷ νῦν καὶ τῆς φρονήσεως κοινωνίαν were not *Menander's* but *Suidas's* words, added by him to explain the Poet, as he understood him. For all that *Menander* had said, was κοινὰ ΠΑΝΤΑ τῷ φίλων, to which *Martial*<sup>d</sup> alludes in that verse,

*Candide, κοινὰ φίλων, hac sunt tua, Candide,  
ΠΑΝΤΑ.*

And *Terence*<sup>e</sup> in these lines,

—— *Vetus verbum hoc quidem est,  
Communia esse amicorum inter se omnia.*

But the πάντα of *Menander* being a comprehensive term, *Suidas* interpreted it as extending to the νῦν and φρόνησις as well as τὰ χρήματα. A 3d instance of this kind<sup>f</sup> is in *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, who cites a Poet after this manner. Ἡ παρὰ τοῦ κωμικοῦ ὀπιλογομένη γυνὴ λέγει, Τί δ' ἂν γυναῖκες φρένιμον ἐργασαίμεθα, ἢ λαμπρὸν, αἱ χαρδήμεθ' ἐξανδισμένα, τῷ ἐλευθέρων γυναικῶν λυμαινόμενα τῷ χαρκαλῆγα· οἷκων ἀνατροπὰς, καὶ γάμων ἐκτροπὰς, καὶ παίδων διαβολὰς πεποιήμενα. *The wise Woman in the comic Poet says, τί δ' ἂν &c.*

<sup>b</sup> Menand. & Philem. reliq. p. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Emendat. in Menand. & Philem. reliq. p. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. II. Epig. XLIII.

<sup>e</sup> Terent. Adelph. V. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Clem. Alex. Pædag. Lib. III. p. 254. Ed. Potter.

Upon reading this Passage who would not think, that the whole was borrowed from the Poet? *Grotius*<sup>g</sup> certainly thought so, and accordingly took the pains of casting it, as he did *Suidas* before, into these *Iambic* verses:

Τί δ' ἂν γυναῖκες φρόνημον ἐργασαίμεθα,  
 Ἡ λαμπρόν, αἱ καθήμεθ' ἐξανθισμέναι,  
 Λυμανόμεναι χαρακλήρα τ' ἐλευθερῶν,  
 Οἴκων ἀνατροπὰς καὶ γάμων ἐτ' ἐκτροπὰς,  
 Καὶ παιδῶν διαβολὰς παραισέμεναι;

But certain it is, that the 3d of these verses is no true *Iambic*, nor belongs to any Poet, but to *Clemens* himself, being his satirical exposition of the word ἐξανθισμέναι, signifying *painted*. The two first verses are still extant in *Aristophanes*<sup>h</sup>, and the two last, I believe, were taken from *Antiphanes*. Our most Learned *Gataker*<sup>i</sup> indeed declar'd all but the two first to be mere prose, and the composition of the *Father* himself. But I own, there appears to me something truly poetical in the turn and expression of the two last verses, which perswades me that they are the words of some *comic* Poet; and none in my opinion is more likely to be the Author of them, than *Antiphanes*, who is immediately after produced by *Clemens*, as ridiculing these very fopperies and extravagancies of Women,

<sup>g</sup> Grot. Excerpt. p. 909.

<sup>h</sup> Aristoph. *Lysistrat.* v. 42.

<sup>i</sup> Gataker. *Adversar. Posthum.* cap. IX.



Τὸ αὐτὸ γάρ τοι καὶ Ἀντιφάνης ὁ κωμικὸς ἐν Μαλ-  
θακῇ τὸ ἐταεικὸν τῶν γυναικῶν ἀποσκώπτει.

It would not be very difficult, to multiply instances of this kind from *Plutarch*, *Athenaeus*, *Pollux*, *Suidas*, and several others; but this would carry me out into long and tedious digressions. Let it suffice therefore to observe in general, that the words of a quotation are frequently so blended and intermixed\* with those of the Writer who quotes them, that they are often confounded one with another by very considerable Men. And this I have observed particularly to happen, where an Author is introduced, as *Phlegon* is by *Africanus*, with an ἰσορρεῖ. From hence then it may seem probable enough, that ἐν Πανσελήνῳ might be inserted by *Africanus*, as his own interpretation of *Phlegon's* μεγίστη τῶν ἐγνωσμένων πέρτερον, which, you see, he entirely omitted in his citation of him, as being perhaps in his judgment tantamount to saying, that his Eclipse was not common and *natural*, but one that happened at *full Moon*. The Reader is now left at liberty to chuse whichever of these three accounts he likes best; and I hope, by this time, the objection from *Africanus* is effectually taken off, and may be fairly dismissed.

\* Aliorum dicta scriptores tum sacri tum profani ita suis saepe-  
numerò intertexta exhibent, ut quid aliunde mutuatum, quid de  
suo adjectum, haud proclive sit internōsse; quod summos etiam  
Viros saepenumērō scellit. Gataker. *Adversar. Posthum.* cap. IX.



## V.

THE next Writer, that Dr. Sykes<sup>k</sup> raises up in opposition to *Eusebius* &c. is *Origen*, whom he seems to prize and caress exceedingly, spending no less than fifteen Pages together, to set him out in his full Strength and brightest Colours. *Origen*, I confess, is a Writer of great Authority, and for whom I have as high an esteem, as, I believe, Dr. Sykes himself. But never sure was *Origen* so harmless an Adversary, as I shall prove him to be in the present dispute. The Reader is desired to remember, that the Point, which I have laboured all along, and that which is now the principal Point in dispute, is the true Reading of *Phlegon*. I maintain, that *Phlegon* placed his Eclipse in the 4th year of Ol. 202. Dr. S. allows, if that be true, *Phlegon's* Eclipse did relate to our Saviour's Passion; therefore what he is to shew, is, that *Phlegon* did not place his Eclipse in that year but some other. Let us now see, what *Origen's* testimony amounts to.

ORIGEN in a certain Discourse<sup>l</sup> upon St. *Matthew*, of which there is now preserved only a *Latin* Translation, and that a very barbarous and obscure one, and composed by no body knows who or when, has drop'd some

<sup>k</sup> Dissert. p. 19. — 34.

<sup>l</sup> Tractat. XXXV. in Matt. p. 199, 200. Ed. Basil.

particulars, which Dr. Sykes has mightily insisted on, but which seem to me as foreign and of as little consequence, as any thing imaginable. To make this clear to every Reader, I must correct that imperfect, erroneous, and obscure Representation of him, which Dr. Sykes has given us, and explain the whole Passage more minutely and particularly, than he has done.

ORIGEN first introduces some Enemies of the Gospel, as saying, *How can that be true according to the Text*, that there was darkness over all the Earth from the sixth hour to the ninth, *which*, say they, *no History ever mentions* <sup>m</sup>? *Which* what? why such a *supernatural darkness as the Gospel relates*. This is what those objectors meant, that no *History* mentions such a *darkness*, with any particular notice of its being *preternatural*, and contrary to the common course of things. And therefore in the next words, they assert, that *there was nothing but a common Eclipse of the Sun at the time of Christ's Passion* <sup>n</sup>. To which *Origen* answers very well <sup>o</sup>,

<sup>m</sup> Quomodo secundum textum potest esse verum quod dicitur, *Facta sunt tenebra super omnem terram à sextâ horâ usque ad nonam*, quod factum nulla refert Historia? Ibid. p. 199.

<sup>n</sup> Dicunt, quia sicut solet fieri in Solis defectione, sic facta est tunc Defectio. Ibid.

<sup>o</sup> Sed defectio Solis, quæ secundum consuetudinem temporum ita currentium fieri solet, non in alio tempore fit, nisi in conventu Solis & Lunæ. — In tempore autem quo passus est Christus, manifestum est quoniam conventus non erat Lunæ ad Solem, quoniam tempus erat paschale, quod consuetudinis est agere, quando Luna Solis plenitudinem habet. Ibid.

that the darkness at the Passion could not arise from a natural Eclipse, because the Moon was then full, and in opposition to the Sun. Here we may observe two faults committed by Dr. S. 1st. His not stating distinctly <sup>p</sup> this first objection of the Pagans, and informing the Reader, how far and in what respects, they asserted, that *no History* mentioned the darkness at the Passion. And 2d. his putting the Answer of *Origen* in the mouth of the Heathens. *He* (*Origen*) *makes* them, says Dr. S., *reason very truly, that this could not arise from any natural Eclipse.* Just the reverse. *Origen* would have made *them* talk nonsensically, if he had made *them* *reason* in this manner. For as they had just before asserted, that the darkness at the Passion was only a common Eclipse, how could they with any sense and consistency in the next Sentence, argue that it was not and could not be a common Eclipse? To go on. *Origen* after he had given his own Answer to these objectors, tells us, that some *Believers* made another sort of *Defense* against them. They argued, that as there were other preternatural events attending the Passion, *Rocks rent, Graves opened, an Earthquake &c.* so the darkness might reasonably be judged to be *prodigious, and preternatural*<sup>q</sup>. To all which the

<sup>p</sup> Dissertat. p. 19.

<sup>q</sup> Quia (l. Quidam) autem credentium volentes defensionem aliquam introducere contra hæc, ita dixerunt.

Pagans reply in defense of their former position, “ *Suppose, that this defectio Solis was preternatural, and that it happened not long ago in the Reign of some Roman Prince, so that darkness were over all the Earth to the ninth hour, how comes it to pass, that no one of the Greeks, no one of any other Nation took any notice of this extraordinary event as happening at that time, especially those who have wrote Chronicles, and remarked every thing that appeared new and strange? How is it, that only your own Writers have taken notice of it? Phlegon indeed in his Chronicles has wrote of a darkness in the Reign of Tiberius Cæsar, but he has not signified that it happened at full Moon*”. Now, before I consider, what *Origen* replies again to these Queries of the Pagans, I would observe, that what is said here by the Pagans of the *Greek* or any other *Historians*, does not

Cum constet cætera prodigia, quæ tunc facta sunt, non secundum consuetudinem facta fuisse, sed nova & admiranda : nam & velum Templi scissum est in duas partes, & terra contremuit, & petrae disruptæ sunt, & monumenta aperta sunt, — manifestum est quoniam & illa defectio Solis consequenter secundum cætera prodigia nova contra consuetudinem facta est. Ibid.

r Pone, quia extra consuetudinem facta est illa defectio Solis in tempore non antiquo, sub Principatu Romanorum, ita ut tenebræ fierent super omnem terram usque ad horam nonam; quomodo hoc factum tam mirabile nemo Græcorum, nemo Barbarorum factum conscripsit in tempore illo; maximè qui *Chronica* conscripserunt, & notaverunt sicubi tale aliquid novum factum est aliquando: sed soli hoc scripserunt vestri Autores? Et *Phlegon* quidem in *Chronicis* suis scripsit, in Principatu *Tiberii Cæsaris* factum, sed non significavit in lunâ plenâ hoc factum. Ibid.

prove



prove one tittle in reality against the reading of *Phlegon*, or *Thallus*, or any other Writer. They do not affirm, or intimate, that *Phlegon* did not speak of an Eclipse in the 4th year of the 202d Olympiad; nay they allow, that he did write of an *Eclipse in the Reign of Tiberius Cæsar*. But the silence of Historians which they mean, and upon which they ground their objection, is a silence as to the particular circumstances of the darkness, the extraordinary nature of it, the place, the week, and day upon which it happened. And finding that these particulars were not minutely specified by any Heathen Historians, they boldly denied, that such Historians confirmed any facts of the Gospel. Thus they evaded here the testimony of *Phlegon*, (which by the way appears from this very Passage to have been urged by the Christians before *Origen's* time) by saying, that *Phlegon* did indeed speak of a darkness in the Reign of *Tiberius*, but that he made no particular mention of the precise time, when it happened, whether it was at *full Moon* or not. Therefore they would not allow that the darkness of *Phlegon* was the darkness at the Passion. And thus were they ready to evade the testimony of *Thallus*, or any other *History* and *Chronicon*. This being premised, let us now see, what *Origen's* second Answer to his Adversaries will prove against us. *Origen* finding that the Heathen Historians were defective as to those  
particu-



particular circumstances mentioned above, and sensible how difficult it was at that time to prove clearly their confirmation of the Gospel-History, chuses to wave their Authority, and answers the Query of the Pagans another way. " I am of opinion, says he<sup>f</sup>, that as the other " Signs which happened at his Passion, were " only done in *Jerusalem*, so likewise that the " darkness was only over all the Land of *Ju-* " *dea*. As to the particulars, which I say, " happened only in *Jerusalem*, they are these. " The veil of the Temple was rent, the Earth " quaked, the Rocks were rent, the Monu- " ments were opened. For out of *Judea* the " Rocks were not rent, nor were any Monu- " ments opened, but those that were in *Jeru-*

f Arbitror ergo, sicut cætera signa, quæ facta sunt in Passione ipsius, in Hierusalem tantummodo facta sunt, sic & tenebræ tantummodo super omnem terram Judæam sunt factæ usque ad horam nonam. Quæ autem dico in Hierusalem tantummodo facta, hæc sunt, quod velum Templi scissum est, quod terra contremuit, quod petrae disruptæ sunt, quod monumenta aperta sunt. Nec enim extra Judæam petrae disruptæ sunt. Nec monumenta aperta sunt alia, nisi ea tantum quæ in Hierusalem erant, aut forte in terrâ Judæâ. Nec alia terra tremuit tunc, nisi terra Hierusalem. Nec enim refertur alicubi, quod omne elementum tremuerit *in tempore illo*, ut sentirent v. g. qui in Ethiopiâ erant, & in Judæâ, & in Scythiâ. Quod si factum fuisset, sine dubio inveniretur in Historicis aliquibus eorum, qui in Chronicis scripserunt nova aliqua facta. Sicut ergo quod dicitur: terra contremuit, refertur ad terram Jerusalem, aut si latius voluerit quis extendere, ad terram Judæam; sic & tenebræ factæ sunt ab horâ sextâ usque ad nonam super omnem terram, intellige quod super omnem terram Judæam sunt factæ, aut certè super Hierusalem tantum. Ibid.

" *salem*

“ *salem*, or at most in the Land of *Judea*:  
“ nor was there any Earthquake elsewhere,  
“ except that in *Ferusalem*: for we have no  
“ account any where, that the whole Earth  
“ was shook *at that time*, e. g. so that those  
“ who were in *Æthiopia*, and those who were  
“ in *India* and in *Scythia* felt it. Which if it  
“ had happened, without doubt it would be  
“ found in some of *their* accounts of things,  
“ who have related unusual facts in their Chro-  
“ nicles. As therefore, when 'tis said, the  
“ Earth quaked, this relates to the Earth at  
“ *Ferusalem*, or if any one would extend it  
“ farther, to the Land of *Judea*; so likewise  
“ when 'tis said, there was darkness over all  
“ the Earth from the sixth hour to the ninth,  
“ understand, that it was over all the Land of  
“ *Judea*; or upon *Ferusalem* alone. These  
were *Origen's* sentiments at that time, and if  
that will be any satisfaction to Dr. S., I am  
willing to allow, that *Origen* then did not think  
or did not know, that any *Greek* or *Barbarian*  
had mentioned any thing of the darkness at  
the Passion. But I desire him to remember,  
that this proves nothing against the testimony  
of *Phlegon* or *Thallus* or any other. *Origen* might  
have seen *Phlegon*, he might have read in him  
the 4th year of the 202d Olympiad, and yet de-  
clined insisting on his testimony against the Pa-  
gans for more reasons than one. 1st. Because  
the year of *Phlegon's* Eclipse was different from  
that,

that, in which most of the Christians and himself in particular placed the Passion of Christ. Therefore he might apprehend it something difficult, to reconcile the one with the other. 2d. *Phlegon* had not noted the particular time of the Year, and day of the Month, when his *Eclipse* happened, and therefore being not able to prove backwards by Astronomy, that no total Eclipse of the Sun could happen naturally that year, he could not convince a scrupulous Pagan, that his Eclipse must have been preternatural, and the same with the darkness at the Passion.

HOWEVER, let him say what he will in this place, he destroys the force of it entirely, by what he declared afterwards in another part of his Works. In his Books against *Celsus*, which are certainly genuine, still extant in the original *Greek*, and disputed by no one, he expressly appeals to our testimony of *Phlegon*. There he asserts roundly, that, *Concerning the Eclipse in Tiberius Cæsar's Reign, in whose time Jesus was crucified, and concerning the great Earthquakes, Phlegon wrote in the 13th Book, I think, of his Chronicles*<sup>t</sup>. Here he plainly retracts, what he had said before in his discourses on *St. Matthew*, and as this work of his against

<sup>t</sup> Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιβερίῳ Καίσαρι ἐκλείψεως, ἡ βαπτιζούσης· ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅμοιον ἔπαυσε, καὶ αὐτὴ μεγάλην τότε γνομένην σεισμῶν τῆς γῆς, ἀνέγραψε καὶ Φλέγον ἐν τῷ τεσσαρδεκάτῳ, αἵμα, τῶν χρονικῶν.  
Orig. cont. Cels. Lib. 2. p. 80. Vid. p. 96.

*Celsus* is allowed to be the most exact and finished piece he ever wrote, by this we ought in reason to be determined in our judgment of *Origen*. Dr. *Sykes* was aware, that something might be urged against him from hence, therefore he interposed very early some caveats and exceptions against it. *If it be said*, says he, *that he mentions his (Phlegon's) Authority in his Books against Celsus, 'tis true. But in what manner does he do it? Is it like one that was convinced of its pertinence*"? Really I cannot but think so, for to what purpose else did he cite him? He positively asserts, that *Phlegon* wrote concerning the Eclipse in Tiberius Cæsar's Reign, which he plainly understood to be the darkness at the Passion. Indeed he speaks only in generals, because that was not the place to prove distinctly the particulars, *Phlegon* coming in by the bye; and he was not willing to interrupt the thread of his Argument against *Celsus* by a long and foreign digression. The Dr. goes on, *Origen could not say nor does he say, that Phlegon expressly spoke of the same darkness and same Earthquake, which was at the time of Christ's Death.* It is very true; *Origen* does not say so much *totidem verbis*, but he either means that, or nothing. And tho' what he says does not prove, that the darkness which *Phlegon* mentions, was actually the darkness which happened at Christ's Death, yet it proves

u Dissertat. p. 28.

that



that *Origen* thought they were both the same; and this is all, which I contend for at present. But, *after all*, how does he here make the best of Phlegon's testimony? Why, he expresses himself in the very loosest manner possible<sup>w</sup>. Mere trifling! The reason of it is, because he did not intend in that place to make the best of it. He speaks of it only in passing, and expresses himself here in the loosest manner, because that was not the time for full explications. Surely a Man is not obliged, whenever he touches upon a point, to write a Treatise professedly upon it. But he cites him, says Dr. S.,<sup>x</sup> as telling of what happened about the time of Christ's Death. Not asserting, that it was at that time, nor pretending any such thing. Very strange indeed! Why must *κατὰ τὸν χρόνον* necessarily signify about the time and not at the time? Is it not used very often in this sense by the best Greek Historians? And do not Ecclesiastical Writers use it often in the same sense? Why then may not *Origen* take the same liberty? But, if Dr. S. will not allow it, I hope he will be pleased to tell us, what Greek Preposition is more proper to express at the time. Sometimes I agree, *κατὰ* does express a latitude, and signifies about, but it does not always; and to prove that it has such a sense in this Passage of *Origen*, is certainly incumbent on Dr. S. Another

<sup>w</sup> Dissertat. p. 29.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid. Defense. p. 25.



Remark upon the Greek Origen is, that<sup>y</sup> notwithstanding his profession that he had done all he could, yet he cited Phlegon so carelessly, that he did not give himself the trouble of looking into him or consulting his Book. This appears from his not knowing certainly in what Book of Phlegon's this Eclipse was mentioned. " It is, says he, I suppose, in the 13th Book of his Chronicles. Let him be as careless as you please in his citations of Phlegon, yet he certainly cites him, and by so doing destroys all Arguments that may be drawn from his Latin work to the contrary. But pray, good Doctor, where is his profession, that he had done all he could, with Phlegon? There are 'tis true, such words in the Greek as κατὰ τὸ δύνατον, but even a careless Reader might perceive on the first sight of the Passage<sup>z</sup>, that they do not belong to the citation of Phlegon, but to Origen's Answer at large to Celsus about the darkness and Earthquake, which is just and strong. Origen only refers to Phlegon, he does not cite him at all properly speaking, that is, he does not pretend to produce his words, as thinking a reference to him at that time sufficient. Neither is it to be pronounced such an heinous instance of carelessness in Origen, or the least diminution of his Credit,

<sup>y</sup> Defense. p. 25.

<sup>z</sup> Οἶται δὲ (Κελσός) πρῶταιον εἶναι καὶ τὸ σεισμὸν [καὶ] τὸ σκότος  
 αὐτῶν, ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟ ΔΥΝΑΤΟΝ, ἐν τοῖς ἀνωτέροις ἀπὸ λογισμῶν  
 παραδεδεμένοι τὸ Φλέγοντι. κ. τ. λ. L. 2. p. 96.

that he hints some uncertainty as to the Book of *Phlegon's* Chronicles, where the Eclipse was recorded. For he might not at the time of writing have the Book in his possession, or it might be displaced so that he could not find it, either of which cases are very possible, and experienced by all Writers. So that he might quote *Phlegon* by memory, not to save trouble but from necessity; and as it happened, he quoted the right Book; which to me is an Argument, that *Origen* was not *careless* in reading, if he was in *citing Phlegon*, and that therefore his Reference to him, was not made at random, but after due consideration.

I have now done with *Origen*, and have endeavour'd to shew, that even admitting the *Latin* discourses upon *St. Matthew* to be a genuine and faithful translation of *Origen*, no objection of any weight can be drawn from thence against the present Text of *Phlegon*, as it stands in *Eusebius* &c. Pass we on now to

III. ANOTHER Writer, *Joannes Philoponus*; who, it seems, is not only against us by inference and *innuendo* like the others, but expressly<sup>a</sup> fixes the Passage of *Phlegon* to the second year of the 202d Olympiad. This to me is the most surprizing assertion in the whole *Dissertation*; and what account or solution to give of it I cannot tell. *Philoponus* indeed, in

<sup>a</sup> *Dissertat.* p. 55.

the present Edition of him, does in one place<sup>b</sup> fix *Phlegon's Eclipse* to the *second* year of the 202d Olympiad. But in the very next page he fixes it twice<sup>c</sup> to the *fourth* year of that Olympiad, and compares the Olympiads with the years of *Tiberius* in so full and exact a manner, as to shew very plainly, that the *fourth* year was the true year of *Phlegon's Eclipse*. The whole Passage of *Philoponus* is as follows. *That Phlegon's Eclipse is no other, than that which happened at the crucifixion of our Lord Christ, — is proved from the history it self of Tiberius Cæsar. For Phlegon says, that he began his Reign in the 2d year of the hundred and ninety eighth Olympiad, and that the Eclipse happened in the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad. So that from the beginning of Tiberius's Reign to the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad, are collected near nineteen years, three of the hundred ninety eighth, and in the other four sixteen. — Now the nineteenth of the Reign of Tiberius was the year, in which the crucifixion of Christ happened, and the wonderful Eclipse of the Sun consequent upon it<sup>d</sup>. Is it not as clear as*

b Τάτῃ τῇ σιότῃ, μᾶλλον δὲ τῇ νυκτὶς ταύτης καὶ Φλέγων ἐν ταύτῃ Ολυμπιάσιν ἐμνήσθη. λέγει γὰρ, ὅτι τῷ ΔΕΥΤΕΡῳ ἔτῃ διακοσίου δυνάμει Ολυμπιάδος ἐγένετο ἡλίου ἐκλειψις μεγίστη τῇ (ὅσην) ἐγνωσμένων αἰώνων. Καὶ νύξ ὥρα ἕκτη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ ἀστέρων ἐν οὐρανῷ φανῆναι. Lib. 2. c. 21. p. 88.

c Τὴν δὲ ἐκλειψιν γεγενῆσθαι ἐν τῷ ΤΕΤΑΡΤῳ ἔτῃ τῇ διακοσίου δυνάμει Ολυμπιάδος.

Εως τῇ ΤΕΤΑΡΤῳ ἔτῃ. p. 89.

d Ὅτι δὲ τῇ ἐν τῷ σαυρῷ τῷ Δισπότῃ Χριστῷ γεγενῆσθαι τῇ ἡλίου ἐκλειψις, καὶ ὅτι ἐτέρας ἐμνήσθη καὶ Φλέγων. Πρῶτον μὲν &c. — Καὶ αὐτὴ αὐτῆς

any thing of this kind can be, that *Phlegon's* Eclipse was according to *Philoponus* in the *fourth* year of the 202d Olympiad, and not the *second*? I leave the Reader to make the proper Comment upon this Calculation, and take the freedom of asking *Dr. Sykes*, why he omitted this whole Passage of *Philoponus* in his first Dissertation. If he did not give himself the trouble of looking into him, or consulting his Book, I'm afraid, the charge of *carelessness*, which he brought against *Origen*, will fall upon himself. If he had seen and considered this Passage, and yet wilfully omitted it, I am equally in pain for his Candour and Ingenuity. But whatever were the reasons of *Dr. Sykes's* conduct in this affair, when *Mr. Whiston* produced this last Passage of *Philoponus* against him, he presently un-

αὐτῆς δὲ τῆς περὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος ἱστορίας δέκνυται. Βασιλεύειν μὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν φησιν ὁ ΦΛΕΓΩΝ, τῷ διυτέρῳ ἔτῃ τ' ἑκατῆς ἐννενηκῆς ὀγδῆς Ολυμπιάδος. Τὴν δὲ ἑκλειψιν γεγονέναι ἐν τῷ ΤΕΤΑΡΤΩ ἔτει τ' διακοσίους διυτέρας Ολυμπιάδος, ὡς συναγάγῃ ἀπὸ τ' ἀρχῆς τ' βασιλευσσι Τιβερίῳ ἕως τ' ΤΕΤΑΡΤΟΥ ἔτους τ' διακοσίους διυτέρας Ολυμπιάδος ἐγγύς που ἔτι δέκα καὶ ἑννα, τρία μὲν τ' ἑκατῆς ἐννενηκῆς ὀγδῆς, τ' δὲ ἄλλων τισάρεων δέκα καὶ ἑξ. Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ Λουκᾶς ἐν ταῖς εὐαγγελίαις ἰσχύσει. Τῷ γὰρ πέντε καὶ δικάτῳ ἔτει τ' Τιβερίου Βασιλείας φησὶ, τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ γεγονέναι, ἐξ οὗ τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸ τ' Σωτῆρος ἔληφε τὸ εὐαγγελικόν. Παρέτεινε δὲ οὐδ' εἰς ὅλους τισάρεας ἑαυτοῦς, ὡς Εὐσέβιος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τ' ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας ἑδάξεν, ἐκ τ' ἀρχαιολογίας Ἰωσήπου τοῦτο συναγάγων. Ἀρξαμένων γὰρ ἐπὶ Ἀννα τ' Ἀρχιερείς, καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν τετῶν ἄλλων Ἀρχιερέων γενομένων, (ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὁ τ' ἀρχιερασύνης ἦν χρόνος) εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν τ' μετ' ἐκείνου ἐρατεύσαντο Καϊάφα πῆρας ἔληφε, ταυραφάντος χριστοῦ. Ἦν δὲ τὸ ἔτος ἐκεῖνο τ' Τιβερίου Καίσαρος βασιλείας ἑννα καὶ δικάτῳ, ἐν ᾧ ἡ σωτηρία τ' χριστοῦ γέγονε τοῦ χριστοῦ ταύρασις, καὶ ἡ ἐπ' αὐτῇ παράδοξις καὶ ἀσυνήτης τῇ φύσει ἑκλειψις ἡλιακή. p. 89.



dertook to prove it of no significancy. For says he<sup>e</sup>, *I would principally observe, that in the place where Philoponus quotes Phlegon's own words, there he has it, in the second year of the 202d Olympiad. When he twice speaks of the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad, there he only gives us Phlegon's sense, and not the words of Phlegon himself.* Well, be it so. Let *Philoponus* in these latter Passages give us only the sense of *Phlegon*. Could he possibly give any other sense of the word *second* in *Phlegon*, but the *second*? Could he give us *four* as the sense of *two*? Yes to serve a turn, Dr. Sykes imagines, though not out of ignorance. For *Philoponus*, it seems, was for applying *Phlegon's Eclipse to the death of Christ, as others had done before him; he was forcing Phlegon's testimony into his Service, contrary to the express words of Phlegon, which then lay before him, and so talk'd inconsistently*<sup>f</sup>.

TRULY Dr. Sykes has an excellent opinion of *Philoponus*, both as to sense and honesty. He supposes *Philoponus* in one Page to bring in *Phlegon*, as placing his Eclipse in the 2d. year of Olympiad 202. and in the next Page to place this very Eclipse of *Phlegon* without any Authority in the 4th year, and then to argue gravely upon it, that *Phlegon's Eclipse* is the same with the darkness at the crucifixion of

<sup>e</sup> Defense. p. 41.

<sup>f</sup> Defense. p. 42.



Christ. A very kind and charitable supposition! Thus would the good Doctor sacrifice poor *Philoponus* for a Knave and a Fool, to gratify his own humour, and support a darling Hypothesis. This is *forcing Men into service* with a witness, against all reason and equity. But the nature of the case will not allow it. No reasonable Man, that ever looked into *Philoponus*, can seriously doubt, that he read in *Phlegon* the 4th not the 2d year of Ol. 202. One would really be apt to imagine, that this suggestion of Dr. *Sykes* was owing to a slender acquaintance with the Character and Writings of *Philoponus*. He was a Man of great Parts, great Study, and great Learning<sup>g</sup>; and had the name of *Philoponus* from his Diligence and Labours. Besides his Philosophical Comments upon *Aristotle*, which are numerous and much esteem'd, there are two Theological Pieces now extant, which are standing proofs of his Abilities; one is an Exposition upon the Mosaical History of the Creation in seven Books, (from whence the Passages abovementioned are extracted) and the other a confutation of *Proclus* the Philosopher, who maintain'd the Eternity of the World. Both these I have read, and I am fully satisfied from thence, that shuffling and selfcontradiction were practices much less known to *Joannes Philoponus*, than to some

<sup>g</sup> Vid. Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. Lib. V. c. 37.

*modern* Writers. He had too much acumen and integrity to quote *δευτέρω* from *Phlegon* in one Page, and to argue upon *πτάρτω* in another. And if such a gross repugnancy did appear in the present Text of *Philoponus*, a candid and ingenuous Reader would rather have suspected some fault in his Text, than downright fraud and folly in the Author himself. Especially as the present Edition of *Philoponus* is very corrupt<sup>n</sup>, as I could shew in a great number of instances. There is hardly a Chapter in the Book without gross depravations; and few there are more plain and obvious than this before us. I make no doubt, but τὰς δ' *δευτέρω* ἔτα was put by the Copyist or Editor for τὰς δ'. ἔτα. Such mistakes in transcribing numerals are often committed; and the numeral δ' particularly is frequently confounded with the initial Letter of *δευτέρω*, and by that means *δευτέρω* in many other Books has been discover'd to be written instead of *πτάρτω*. How far Dr. *Sykes* will acquiesce in this Emendation, I cannot tell; but I am not apprehensive, that a majority of Criticks will dispute it.

## VI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the plain Representation of *Phlegon's* words, which *Ferom* has gi-

<sup>n</sup> Non satis diligenter ubique in Græcis describendis versatam esse editorem testatus est Lambecius; qui ex eodem Codice novam hujus operis editionem daturum se promisit cum notis, in supplemento, quod meditabatur, Bibliothecæ Patrum. Fabric. ubi sup.

ven us above, yet, it seems, even *Jerom* himself overthrows that very Reading of *Phlegon*, which before he so plainly exhibited. For *Jerom*, says Dr. Sykes<sup>i</sup>, *has actually fix'd the Passage of Phlegon to the 3d year of the 202d Olympiad, at the same time, that he gives us the words quarto anno in the 4th year.* For a clear proof of which, the Doctor lays before the Reader *Jerom's* Chronology in this point, just as it stands at present in *Scaliger's* Edition of his *Latin Chronicon*. But to this I reply, that *Jerom's* *quarto anno* is so far from losing any of its force and Authority by this suggestion, that it absolutely disproves the suggestion itself. For the *quarto anno* Ol. 202. are *Jerom's* own words, positive and express, certain and unquestionable; whereas the Doctor's suggestion, that he fixed the Passage of *Phlegon* in Ol. 202. 3. has no other foundation, than that disposition or correspondence of years and facts, which *Scaliger* gives us in his Edition of *Jerom's* Chronicon. According to this indeed, *Phlegon* is placed under the 3d year of Ol. 202, but I will be bold to assert, that any argument drawn from hence is very weak and inconsiderable. For 1<sup>st</sup>. It is plain, that *Jerom* here does nothing but translate *Eusebius*; now *Eusebius*, as *Scaliger* shews<sup>k</sup>, and Dr. Sykes allows, places *Phlegon* in the 4th year of Ol. 202, How then

<sup>i</sup> Differt p. 49.

<sup>k</sup> Scal. Animadv. in Euseb. p. 170.

should *Jerom*, who according to Dr. S. is *so near a translator*<sup>1</sup>, place him in the 3d of the same Olympiad? Is it likely, that *Jerom* in his translation of *Eusebius*, should represent *Eusebius* so different from himself? 2. *Arnaldus Pontacius*<sup>m</sup>, who published the *Latin Chronicon* with much more care and accuracy than *Scaliger* from a great number of Manuscripts, informs us, that in some MSS. *Phlegon* is placed a year lower, in the 19th of *Tiberius*, or Ol. 202. 4. And 'tis very well known, and has been often observed by very Learned Men, *Valesius*<sup>n</sup>, *Baluzius*<sup>o</sup>, *Dodwell*<sup>p</sup>, and Dr. *Bentley*<sup>q</sup>, that *Scaliger's* Edition of that *Chronicon* is frequently faulty as to the years, in which historical facts are ranged. So that *Jerom's* absurdity, as the Doctor styles it, in placing *Phlegon* under the 3d year of Ol. 202, and in translating *Phlegon* at the same time *quarto anno*, is not so manifest, as the Learned Doctor may imagine.

If it be said, that according to *Jerom*, our Saviour preached three years after the fifteenth of *Tiberius*\*, and consequently must place the Passion of Christ in the 3d year of Olymp. 202. I reply that *Eusebius*<sup>r</sup>, whom *Jerom* tran-

<sup>1</sup> Dissert. p. 49.

<sup>m</sup> Pontac. Not. in Euseb. p. 551.

<sup>n</sup> Vales. Annotat. in Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. I. cap. V.

<sup>o</sup> Baluz. in Lactant. Mort. Persecut. cap. VIII. XVII.

<sup>p</sup> Dodwell. Dissertat. in Iren. III. §. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Dr. Bentley's Dissertat. upon Phalaris. p. 67.

\* Dissertat. p. 52.

<sup>r</sup> Chronic. Græc. p. 188.



flates and follows, says the same thing, and yet he places the Passion in the 4th year of Ol. 202. and why might not *Jerom* do so too?

BUT in short, allowing, that *Jerom* himself did really fix the Passion in Ol. 202. 3., yet still the *quarto anno* of *Phlegon* stands immovable. For we have seen above†, that the Author of the *Historia Miscella* fixed the Passion in the same year, and yet applies *Phlegon's* Eclipse to the darkness at the Passion, which he assures us himself, was placed by *Phlegon* in Ol. 202. 4. and the XIXth of *Tiberius*. Why then may not *Jerom* agree with *Phlegon's quarto anno*, as well as that *Latin Historian*? And why must *Jerom's Chronology* invalidate it so much, when the other's affects it so little? I can see no such disparity in the two cases, to make such a difference in Authority.

IV. Dr. *Sykes* for five or six Pages together makes some very feint attempts to set up *Eusebius* against *Phlegon*. He tells us of omissions and inaccuracies, which he sometimes is guilty of, that he *heaps together in one and the same year things which happened several years both before and after the year he is speaking of*. And then he assures us, that we *cannot be certain that Phlegon's Eclipse happened this year, merely because Eusebius has cited it under this year*‡. But upon a little recollection finding that all this was

† See p. 31, 32.

‡ Dissertat. p. 45, 46.



foreign to the point, that the *mere words* of *Eusebius* were nothing to the *Chronological Characters* of *Phlegon* himself, he drops contentedly this amusing digression as of no consequence; and therefore to save both the Reader and myself any needless trouble, I readily consent to drop it too.

HAVING now run thro' the several objections of *Dr. Sykes*, which are founded upon antient Authorities, it may not be amiss to make a short recapitulation of what has hitherto been said.

I have shewn then in the foregoing Pages, that all the dispute at present between *Dr. Sykes* and us concerning *Phlegon*, must turn upon the reading of *Phlegon's* words, and that this reading must be settled according to those rules of Criticism, and that kind of proof, which are generally made use of and allow'd in such cases. I have shewn moreover, that the common reading of *Phlegon* is supported by Authority and Evidence of this sort, as great as almost any Fragment of Antiquity can pretend to, and by much greater than falls to the share of most Fragments, which are yet receiv'd and uncontested by the Learned. I have also obviated the several objections and difficulties, which have been raised by *Dr. S.* from *Africanus*, *Origen*, *Philoponus* and *Jerom*; and am perswaded that none of them are strong enough to prove, that the year of *Phlegon's* Eclipse was  
any

any other than the *fourth* of the 202d Olympiad. This being done, I might now very fairly take my leave of *Phlegon* and Dr. *Sykes*, having performed all, which even in the judgment of Dr. *S.* himself, was necessary towards finishing the dispute. But as there still remain some difficulties behind, which tho' not affecting immediately the Text of *Phlegon*, yet may discourage the application of it to the darkness at the Passion;

I proceed in the next place to consider them in their order.

VII.

I. Dr. *S.* seems to doubt very much, whether *Phlegon's* *ἑκλειψις* can denote any other than a *real* and *natural* Eclipse. Indeed if it cannot, then he could not speak of the Eclipse at the Passion, which was certainly *preternatural*. But no substantial reason can be given, why the *Greek* word must be thus restrained. In its primary and original signification it certainly imports any sort of *defectus*<sup>t</sup>; and tho' it became a term in Astronomy, and was used to signify a *natural Eclipse* either of Sun or Moon, yet neither Astronomers nor Historians were debarred

<sup>t</sup> Est *Eclipsis* vox Græca, ab ἐκλείπω deficio, quæ deliquium aut *Defectionem* significat, unde ægri & moribundi, cum deliquium animi, & languor letalis eos corripit, in *Eclipsin* incidisse dicuntur. Keil. *Lectien. Astronom.* Lect. XI.

from applying it to such *preternatural Phenomena*, as nearly resembled a *natural Eclipse* in effect tho' not in the *cause*. For how should they express such *preternatural Phenomena* at all, but by words already in use? What new name should they give them, when they know not their nature and cause? The most proper word they could use to express such *Phenomena* is ἐκλείψις; for as they are supposed to be very like a *natural Eclipse*, no one word could express that likeness so well as ἐκλείψις. Σκότος or any other word would be low and jejune, very short and defective. So that necessity and propriety too would prompt them to use the other. And here I have two very excellent Judges of Language *Grotius* and *Huetius* concurring with me; whose Authority, I believe, may be laid in the balance with that of the Learned Dr. *Sykes*. The first says \*, ἐκλείπειν *Sol dici possit, cum quovis modo deficit*. The latter †, *Quocumque modo Sol deficiat, ἐκλείπειν dici potest, & omnis defectus, sive ordinarius, sive extraordinarius, est ἐκλείψις*.

IF Dr. *Sykes* should ask me, but is not ἐκλείψις in *Phlegon* more naturally and easily understood of a *natural Eclipse*? I grant it. But the question at present is, whether it must necessarily be so understood. If not, if it may be understood of one that is *preternatural*, then in

\* Grot. in Matt. XXVII. 45.

† Huet. Demonstr. Evang. Propos. III. p. 29. Ed. 6.

the present case it is no argument for altering the date of it. *But do any Writers in fact*, says Dr. Sykes, *ever call a darkness extraordinary an Eclipse?* Perhaps not, because there might never be known before a *darkness extraordinary enough to be called so*. The *darkness* at the Passion might perhaps be the only one so nearly resembling an *Eclipse*, as to deserve the name. And, I hope, of such *preternatural* darkness Dr. Sykes does not expect many instances to be produced. Nay *one* besides this is more than can reasonably be demanded; for as there must be a *first time* for calling *preternatural Phenomena* by improper names; it might as well begin in this case as in any other.

HOWEVER to satisfy Dr. Sykes, I can produce some instances of such expressions both in *Greek* and *Latin* Writers. *Dio*<sup>u</sup> says, that among other Prodigies which preceded *Augustus's* Death, there was a *total Eclipse of the Sun*, ὅτε γὰρ ἥλιος πᾶς ἐξέλιπε. And *Jerom* says, *Defectio Solis facta*. The verb ἐξέλιπε here without a case after it, is as proper an *Astronomical* Term, as ἐκλειψις. And yet it does not mean a natural *Eclipse*; for as Dr. Sykes<sup>w</sup> acknowledges, no such total Eclipse happen'd at Rome within eight years of his death. Wherefore *Calvisius*<sup>x</sup>

<sup>u</sup> Lib. 56. p. 589.

<sup>w</sup> Defensio. p. 53.

<sup>x</sup> Refert *Dio* etiam Eclipsin Solis accidisse ante mortem Augusti, ubi Sol totus obscuratus sit, quæ Eclipsis nullibi invenitur. Credibile videtur, quemadmodum Xerxe transeunte Hellespontum, Phenomenon in Sole accidit, quo lumen amisit, & quod cladem



ingenuously resolves this *Eclipse* of *Dio* into an extraordinary *Phænomenon*. To answer, that *Dio* and *Ferom* may both be mistaken, is trifling and groundless, without any Authority but fancy and conjecture. Again. *Servius*<sup>y</sup> tells us, that at *Julius Cæsar's* death there was a *Solis defectus* from the sixth hour till Night; which therefore could not be natural; and yet he expresses it by *defectus*, which among the *Latins*<sup>z</sup> was the current term for an *Eclipse*, as *ἔκλειψις* was among the *Greeks*.

ANOTHER instance of this kind we have in the old and excellent *Scholiast* upon *Aristophanes*. That Author tells us<sup>a</sup>, that when *Stratocles* was *Archon* Ol. LXXXVIII. 4. at the time that *Cleon* was chosen General by the *Athenians*, there happened an *Eclipse* of the Moon in the Month *Boedromion*, which answers to part of our *September* and *October*. Now it is certain, as Mr. *Dodwell*<sup>b</sup> has shewn at large, that the day upon which this *Eclipse* is said to have happened, was the 30th of the Month *Boedromion*, called by the *Athenians* *ἐν τῇ νέᾳ*, or the last day of the old and the first of the new Moon. How

Græciæ portendit, ita tale quid accidisse ante mortem Augusti.  
Opus Chronolog. p. 430.

y Constat occiso Cæsare in Senatu, pridie Iduum Martiarum *Solis fuisse defectum*, ab horâ sextâ usque ad noctem. In *Georgic.* I. v. 466. Vid. & *Plin. Lib. 2. c. 30.*

z Vid. *Plin. Lib. 2. cap. VI, VII, VIII, IX, X.* Ed. Hard.

a *Ἐκλειψὶς ἐγένετο Σελήνης — ἐπὶ Στρατοκλέους Βοηδρομιῶνι.* Schol. in *Aristoph. Nub. v. 584.*

b *Dodwell. de Cycl. Vet. p. 32. seq.*

then



then could there happen any proper *Eclipse* of the Moon? Or how could the *Scholiast* suppose any such to happen? And yet, we see, he calls this *defectio* of the Moon an ἔκλειψις, and by this word interprets that verse in *Aristophanes*.

Ἡ Σελήνη δ' ἐξέλιπέ γε τὰς ὁδούς.

The same *Scholiast*<sup>c</sup> tells us, that at this very time (when *Cleon* was elected General) there was likewise an *Eclipse* of the Sun. What! a *natural* and *proper* *Eclipse* of both the *Sun* and the *Moon* at the same time? That's impossible. So knowing and diligent a Person, as this *Scholiast* appears to be, could never imagine such a Paradox to be real and probable. But as the *Poet* intimates by these lines of his *Chorus* the *Clouds*,

———— τὰς ὀφρῶς συνήχομεν,

Καὶ πιῶμεν δειρά

That when *Cleon* was chosen General\*, the weather was very cloudy, dark and tempestu-

<sup>c</sup> Ἡλίας ἐγένετο κατὰ πᾶν τόχῳ ἔκλειψις Κλέωνος χειροτονουμένου. Id. ad v. 585.

\* Mr. Dodwell (*Cycl. Vet.* p. 35.) and the great *Ezechiel Spanheim* (*Not. in loc.*) think, that *Aristophanes* here does not speak of *Cleon's* first expedition to *Pylus*, which was *Ol.* 88. 4. but his second into *Thrace*, *Ol.* 89. 3. But this is only a conjecture of theirs, and may be plainly disproved from *Aristophanes* himself. For these lines, in which he speaks of *Cleon*, were in the first Edition of the *Νεφέλαι*, as the old *Scholiast* assures us. Ex τῶ πρώτων, says he, *Νεφέλων* ἐστὶ πᾶσι. Now the πρώτων *Νεφέλαι* were acted, when *Isarchus* was *Archon*, *Ol.* 89. 1. that is, two years before *Cleon* went into *Thrace*. How then could *Aristophanes* in *Ol.* 89. 1. speak of an expedition of *Cleon* into *Thrace* *Ol.* 89. 3.?

cus, and as he humourously represents the Sun and Moon Eclipsed at this dismal season ;

Ἡ Σελήνη δ' ἐξέλιπε γὰρ τὰς ὁδούς· ὁ δ' ἥλιος  
τὴν θρυαλλίδ' εἰς ἐαυτὸν εὐθέως συνελκύσας  
οὐ φανεῖν ἔφασκεν ὑμῖν.

So the Scholiast seems to mean no more by his *ἐκλείψις*, than some remarkable *obscuratio* of the Sun and Moon, occasioned by Clouds and Storms. This I take to be the true meaning of the *Scholiast*; and this interpretation of him frees us at once from all those difficulties, which have given so much trouble to many Learned Men†. For as to any *natural* Eclipse of the Sun or Moon at *that time*, all Writers agree there was none.

THESE few Authorities then may serve to shew, that as to the word *ἐκλείψις* no just exception lies against *Phlegon*.

## VIII.

II. A second difficulty, which is artfully and speciously urged by Dr. S.<sup>d</sup> is this. *That Phlegon's words expressly mention, or hint at nothing but an Eclipse of the Sun, nothing preternatural or extraordinary: now had he designed a preternatural Eclipse of the Sun at the time of full*

† Dodwell. de Cycl. Vet. p. 32. seq.

Samuel. Petit. Eclog. Chron. Lib. IV. cap. XII.

Ezechiel. Spanhem. in Aristoph. p. 285, 286. Ed. Kust.

Dissertat. p. 65. Defense. p. 10, 11.

## Phlegon's omissions considered. 69

*Moon, 'tis scarce possible for him not to have taken notice of it. So that Phlegon's omission of such a circumstance, is a very strong argument, that he was not speaking of an Eclipse at the full Moon. How absurd is it to imagine, that an accurate Man, curious in his accounts of what passed, should barely take notice of the darkness of an Eclipse, and yet that he should not take any notice of the duration of the darkness for three hours, nor of its being at full Moon, nor in short of any thing preternatural, and more than ordinarily remarkable? That a Man so considerable for his abilities and accuracy in writing, should yet be so inaccurate, as to omit the only very remarkable circumstances in such events as he mentions, is highly improbable in it self. The difficulty is stated here in the Doctor's words at full length, that it might not lose any of its force by an imperfect Epitome from me. And a difficulty it certainly is at first sight, which may happen to surprize and startle us excessively. But when we recollect one circumstance, which Dr. Sykes unaccountably forgot, perhaps the surprize and difficulty too may be something abated. Phlegon did not write his *Olympiads* at the time when this Eclipse happened, but at least an hundred years after; for he liv'd as I have shewn above, in the Emperor *Adrian's* time, was himself a *libertus* or *freedman* of the Emperor, and carried his Chronology down to the first year of *Olympiad**

*Olympiad* 229<sup>e</sup>, which is full an hundred years after the death of Christ. Now as I apprehend, it is not so much to be wondered, that *Phlegon*, tho' a wise Man and an accurate Chronologer, should omit many circumstances of an Eclipse which he never saw. He was forced to take his accounts of things, from Persons who might not be accurate Astronomers, or exact observers of every circumstance. And therefore it is a little absurd in Dr. *Sykes* to compare, as he does<sup>f</sup>, the case of *Phlegon* with that of an *Historian*, who should live at the very time of such an extraordinary Eclipse. To which I must add, that the antient *Historians* and *Chronologers* were seldom or never so minute and particular in observations of this kind; they<sup>g</sup> contented themselves very often with a bare mention of an *Eclipse*, without remarking the time or duration or any article of moment concerning it. And this even in cases, where something extraordinary and striking occurred; as may be seen in *Dio* and *Servius* quoted above. An accurate *Modern* might wonder, that neither of these two Writers should take the least notice of the place of the *Moon* at the time of their *Solar* Eclipse; and that one of them should not drop a syllable about the *duration, day, or hour*

e Vid. Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. L. IV. c. XIII. p. 397, 399.

f Defense. p. 9, 10.

g Vid. Epistol. Chronolog. Cl. Alphons. des Vignol. adv. Harduin. p. 236. Ed. 1708.



## Phlegon's *omissions* considered. 71

of his. Yet wonderful as this is, the fact is certain, that neither of them speak of a *natural* and *proper* Eclipse. And why might not the Author, whom *Phlegon* followed, be as little exact and particular? However to make some amends for his silence about the *Moon*, he tells us that this *Eclipse* † *was the greatest of any that had been known before*; which seems to me to be a plain intimation, that it was not a common and *natural* one. *Solar* Eclipses and those *total* had been known before<sup>h</sup>, how therefore could this be the *greatest* of any known before in a *natural* way? Dr. Sykes replies, that *Phlegon* by μέγιστη τῶν ἐγνωσμένων τετραγών, and *Ferom* by magna & excellens inter omnes, may mean no more than a *very great and remarkable one*<sup>i</sup>. Which interpretation of *Phlegon* and *Ferom* is so remarkable, so excellens inter omnes, that I shall not say one word to disprove it. But perhaps, as Dr. Sykes replies again, *this Eclipse might be stiled the greatest of any known before, not as if there never was a greater in no part of the World, but that a greater had not been known by any body alive, or in Asia minor*<sup>k</sup>. It is possible indeed, that it might be so; but as *Phlegon* says nothing of *Asia minor*, nor

† Μέγιστη τῶν ἐγνωσμένων τετραγών.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Petav. Doctrin. Tempor. Lib. 3.

<sup>i</sup> Def. p. 67. Dissertat. p. 77.

<sup>k</sup> Defense. p. 68.

of any body alive, he need not submit to any such conjectural and precarious limitations.

ANOTHER remarkable character of *Phlegon's* Eclipse, is the *great Earthquake*, which he mentions as *overthrowing a great part of the City Nice* †. That this Earthquake accompanied the Eclipse, is evident enough from the Text of *Phlegon*; and Dr. *Sykes*<sup>1</sup> himself seems willing to allow it. Now this is a circumstance very particular and extraordinary, not usual in other common Eclipses; between which and an Earthquake there is no visible connection in Nature, nor any observed before in History. This therefore as it serves to distinguish *Phlegon's* Eclipse from all others, so it seems to be a plain indication, that it was not exactly of the same nature with others. But one principal use of it is to shew, that *Phlegon's* Eclipse must be different from that of *Kepler's* in Ol. 202. 1. which he and Dr. *Sykes* would have to be the same; for no *History* no *Chronicon* ever mentions a syllable of an Earthquake attending that Eclipse. And for want of this circumstance beside other reasons, that Eclipse of *Kepler's* has no more relation to *Phlegon's*, than those recorded in *Thucydides*.

I cannot dismiss this article, without taking notice of a pleasant remark, which Dr. *Sykes*

† Συμπῆς τε μέγας κατὰ Εὐβοίαν σεισμός· καὶ πολλὰ τῆς Νικαίας καταπίπτει.

<sup>1</sup> Def. p. 67.

Phlegon's omissions considered. 73

makes upon these last words of Phlegon. If you will take these words rigidly, says he, the greatest of any known before, then this will prove too much. For when a thing was never known before, it is absurd to call it the most remarkable, or the greatest of any known before \*. Which is nothing but quibble and sophism. For take but *Eclipse* out of its strict and rigid sense, and apply it, as it may be and is often applied, to any *defectus* of the Sun, and the little difficulty immediately vanishes. For any one *defectus* of the Sun may be very well compar'd with another, as to *effects* and *circumstances*, tho' they are not strictly of the same kind, and do not proceed from the same cause. Some may properly be said to be greater or less than others, in *duration* for instance, or *darkness* and the like, tho' all do not arise from a natural conjunction of Sun and Moon.

To this the Dr. adds an elegant piece of Criticism upon *Joannes Philoponus*. And therefore Philoponus, who reasons justly from this principle, that there never had been such an Eclipse, has added a negative particle to this citation, and reads it *μεγίστη τῶν ΟΥΚ ἔγνωσμένων ὡς ποτε*, designing to intimate that such an one had not been known before, tho' manifestly corrupting Phlegon †. Never sure was *Philoponus* so cruelly treated, as he has been now by Dr. Sykes. He is ist, represented as corrupt-

\* Def. p. 66.

† Ibid.

ing *Phlegon* by inserting words of his own, and next as putting nonsense upon him. For it seems to me to be little less than downright nonsense and contradiction, to say an *Eclipse was the greatest of any not known before*, i. e. to make a comparison with what never was. But all other Criticks are kinder to *Philoponus*, and pronounce  $\text{ὅτι}$  a corruption in the Copy, as it manifestly is. And perhaps Dr. Sykes himself would have used him better, if he had found him a real friend.

## IX.

III. *The darkness at our Saviour's Passion was not over all the Universe, but was peculiar to Judea, and the Earthquake likewise was confined to Jerusalem, or at most to Judea, as Origen fully proves. Therefore Phlegon mentioning the effects of an Earthquake several hundred Miles off of Judea, plainly shews, that he speaks of a different Earthquake, and a different Eclipse from that darkness and Earthquake, that was peculiar to Judea<sup>m</sup>.* If the premises here were certainly true, and *Origen's* Authority in this case irrefragable, then the conclusion would likewise be very just and undeniable. But alas! very little foundation is there either for the one or the other. For

Ist. THE sacred Evangelists do not confine the darkness and Earthquake to *Jerusalem* or *Judea*. Their Phrase is ἐπὶ πᾶσαν γῆν, and ἐφ' ὃ

<sup>m</sup> Dissert. p. 65.



## Darkness &c. not peculiar to Judea. 75

ὅλην γῆν, and those expressions are often used \* to signify the *whole* World, or at least a much greater part of it than the Land of *Judea*; and how does it appear, that in this place they must necessarily be restrained?

THE Learned *Reland* † speaks very well upon this head. *If any one is of opinion, that the Phrase πᾶσα γῆ may signify here only the Land of Judea, as it does Luke IV. 25. I shall not deny it. I confess, those words may be so understood. But let him on the other side grant to me, that the same words may signify the whole World, as they certainly do in those other Passages which I have produced from the New Testament. Let him farther consider, that the sense of the words is rather to be strengthened and enlarged, than to be weakened and restrained. And that besides here are many places opposed to but one; and that the three Evangelists all make use of the same expression, not*

\* Luke XXI. 35. Rom. IX. 17. X. 13. Apocal. V. 6. XIII. 3.

Πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν hic ita sumendum arbitror, ut apud *Lucam* II. 1. πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, de Orbe Romano, aut certè de potissimâ ejus parte. Grot. in Matt. XXVII. 45. Vid. Wolfii *Curæ Criticæ* & *Philolog.* Tom. I. p. 407.

† Si quis existimet, uti *Luc. IV. 25.* πᾶσα ἡ γῆ notat solum terram Israeliticam, ita hic quoque notare posse, me non habebit repugnantem. Fateor ita posse accipi; verum & ipse mihi vicissim largiatur, eadem verba posse universum terrarum Orbem significare, uti in aliis istis locis ex novo Testamento à me productis verè significant. Consideret etiam vim vocum *firmendam* potius & *augendam*, quam *labefactandam* & *minuendam* esse: prætercà uni loco *Luc. IV. 25.* opponi multa alia: & non sine emphasi tres Evangelistas eodem loquendi modo usos, & πᾶσαν vel ὅλην adjecisse, qui aliàs eadem narrantes non ita iisdem verbis rem exprimere solent. *Rel. Palæstin. Illust.* Tom. I. cap. V.

without a particular Emphasis, adding *πᾶσα* and *ὅλη*, who at other times do not use to express the same thing in the same words. Thus far that excellent Writer, whose Judgment is of no small weight among the best Criticks and Divines.

2. As to *Origen*, he does indeed in his *Latin* work, which has been quoted above, confine both Eclipse and Earthquake to the Land of *Judea*. But how does he *fully prove it*, as *Dr. Sykes* would persuade us? Only by a private conjecture of his own, introduced by a modest *Arbitror*<sup>n</sup>; but not one tittle of *positive* Evidence does he bring to confirm it. All his proof is of the *negative* kind, founded on a *supposed* silence of *Pagan* Writers, as to such an *Universal* darkness and Earthquake. But if *Origen* had not collected accounts from *all* parts of the World, of an Earthquake and Eclipse at the time of our Saviour's Passion, does that *prove fully* or at all, that there were *no* accounts of such events in *any* part of the World at that time besides *Judea*? Is it necessary to suppose, that *Origen* at that time knew all that had been written about them? That he had seen all the Memoirs of what had passed in *India*, *Ethiopia*, *Scythia*, or in any other part of the World? Or is it impossible, that *Origen* might say this, because he could not easily apply such accounts

<sup>n</sup> *Arbitror* ergo; sicut cætera signa quæ facta sunt in Passione ipsius, in Hierusalem tantummodo facta sunt; sic & tenebræ tantummodo super omnem terram Judæam sunt factæ usque ad horam nonam. Tractat. 35. in Matt.

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to his own time of the Passion? *Thallus*, and *Phlegon*, and many others might be known to take notice of an extraordinary *Earthquake* and *Eclipse*; and yet *Origen* might imagine that they gave no accounts of such things as done at that time, i. e. at the Passion, as fixed by him. Surely such a bare conjecture of *Origen's*, so slightly supported, can never amount to a full proof, that the darkness and *Earthquake* at the Passion were peculiar to Judea. But so it happens, when Men have any darling Hypothesis. Every thing, that seems in the least to favour it, is a full proof; but all against it is good for nothing. I would ask the Learned Dr. *Sykes*, why *Africanus* does not afford us as full proof, that the darkness and *Earthquake* were extended beyond Judea, as *Origen* does of the contrary? *Africanus* declares expressly, that there was a most dreadful darkness καὶ ὅλη τῆ κόσμου all over the World; that the Rocks were rent by an *Earthquake*, and many places in Judea, and in the other parts of the Earth were thrown down°. Why is not this as convincing as *Origen's* arbitrator on the other side? *Africanus* was as antient as *Origen*, as knowing in History as *Origen*, and as far as I can find, as honest and careful. Why then is a bare conjecture of the one better proof than a positive assertion of the other, in a mat-

ο καὶ ὅλη τῆ κόσμου σκέτο· ἐγένετο φοβερώτατος· Σεισμὸς δὲ αἱ πέτραι διέρρηγνυντο, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῆ Ἰουδαίας καὶ τῆ λοιπῆς γῆς κατεπίπευ. Ap. Syncell. p. 322.

ter of fact? But to destroy effectually this *proof* of *Origen*, full as it appears to Dr. Sykes, I must once more appeal to the genuine *Origen*, who in his *Greek Work* against *Celsus*, as I have observed above, makes no scruple to acknowledge *Phlegon* as a witness both of the *Eclipse* and *great Earthquake* at the *Passion* of *Christ* <sup>p</sup>. I now leave the Reader to judge, which *Origen* is of most Authority. He who appears only in a barbarous *Latin Translation*, which few value so much as Dr. Sykes, or he who is still extant in his original *Greek*. He who at one time offers a private opinion, or he who after more experience and consideration, thinks fit to retract it. He who proposes a conjecture, when he was younger and less knowing, or he who corrects it, when he was older and wiser.

To all which let me add, that the *Antients* in general extended the darkness and Earthquake of the *Passion* beyond *Judea*. It is a *mundi casus* with *Tertullian* <sup>q</sup>, with *Arnobius* <sup>r</sup> *universa mundi sunt elementa turbata*, with the Author of the *Recognitiones Clementis* probably older than both, *omnis ei* (*Christo*) *compassus est*

p Περὶ τῆς ἐπὶ Τιθερίου Καίπρου ἐκλείψεως. — Καὶ αὐτὸς ΜΕΓΑΛΩΝ ΣΕΙΣΜΩΝ τῆς γῆς ἀνέγραψε ἐ Φλέγων. Lib. II. p. 80.

q Apologet. c. 21. Eum *Mundi casum* relatum in archivis vestris habetis.

Cum *Mundi casum* vocat, satis cavit, ne *Judæe peculiaris* crederetur. Grot. in Matt XXVII. 45.

r Arnob. Adv. Gent. L. 1. p. 32.



*Sun not obstructed by Clouds &c.* 79

*mundus, omnis mundus commotus*<sup>f</sup>. Now these Writers concurring with *Africanus* and the Greek *Origen* are, I think, considerable Evidence against any *Modern*, who shall please to assert without any Authority in *Antiquity*, that the darkness and Earthquake were both peculiar to Judea.

X.

IV. THE last difficulty that lies in our way, is this, That *Phlegon* not only calls his Eclipse, an Eclipse of the Sun, but he adds likewise, that the Stars appeared in Heaven. Now had he intended any darkness, but what arose from a true and proper Eclipse, he could not have added this circumstance, because whatever obstructed the rays of the Sun, would much more obstruct the light of the Stars<sup>t</sup>. Very true, if the rays of the Sun had been obstructed by Clouds. But how does Dr. S. know, that the Sun was obstructed in this manner? Mere suppositions, which have no other ground but fancy and private conjecture, are worth nothing, at least they can prove nothing. It is much more probable, that this darkness was the same in Effect with that of an Eclipse, tho' exceeding it in Degree. As it was *preternatural* in it self, so it was likely to be very far removed from any ordinary

<sup>f</sup> Lib. I. §. XLI.

<sup>t</sup> Dissertat. p. 67, 68.

cause of darkness, such as *thick Clouds, Fogs &c.* This is the opinion of *Grotius*<sup>u</sup>, and as I conceive one of equal weight and influence with that other of *Dr. Sykes*. So that for any thing, which *Dr. S.* can shew to the contrary, *Stars might appear in the Heavens* in the darkness at the Passion, as well as in a proper Eclipse.

## CONCLUSION.

THESE are all the difficulties and objections, which, as far as I can find, are started by the Learned *Dr. Sykes* against our reading of *Phlegon*. And these being answered fully and carefully, and the Text of *Phlegon* sufficiently vindicated and established, as I hope, in the Pages preceding has been done in some measure, the consequence is, that all the suspicions of *Kepler*, together with his Solar Eclipse, must of course be given up as foreign and of no consequence. For what is an Eclipse in *Ol. 202. 1.* to that of *Phlegon* in the *fourth* year of the same *Olympiad*?

LET the calculations of the former Eclipse be made never so exact, let them shew to an instant at what time it began, how long it lasted, and where its Central Shadow passed, yet still, so long as the present Reading of *Phle-*

<sup>u</sup> Non interpositâ Lunâ, ut quæ tum plena esset, neque nube obductâ, sed modo quodam hominibus ignoto. *Grot. ubi sup.*

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*gon* stands, it cannot be the same with *Phlegon's*, because it happened 4 years before it, and 4 years in this case are as good as forty. No one I suppose will venture to assert, or endeavour to prove it impossible *à priori*, that *Phlegon* should take any notice in his Chronicles of that extraordinary darkness, which happened at the Passion. If so, then the fact it self, *viz.* that *Phlegon* did actually take notice of it, if affirmed, must be proved from *Phlegon* himself, if denied, disproved from the same Author. This seems to me to be the surest, the most proper, and the most compendious way of deciding the Controversy; and for this reason, I have here confined myself to a strict examination of *Phlegon's* words. The issue of which is, that *Phlegon*, in my opinion, does manifestly appear to have fixed his Eclipse in Olympiad CCII. 4. and the direct consequence of this is, that as by Dr. Sykes's confession no *natural Eclipse* of the Sun did happen that year, *Phlegon's* Eclipse must be judged by all, who place the Passion of Christ in that year, to relate to the darkness at the Passion. This, I say must be the consequence, while the Reading of *Phlegon* is such, as I have here represented it. If it can fairly be shewn to be otherwise by better Evidence, I shall make no scruple to admit it, and shall agree with Dr. Sykes in dropping this *Testimony*.

## POSTSCRIPT.

**T**ERTULLIAN speaking to the Romans concerning our Saviour's Passion, has the following Passage. *Eodem momento dies media* (vulg. medium) *Orbem signante Sole subducta est. Deliquium utique putaverunt, qui id quoque super Christo pradicatum non scierunt: ratione non deprehensa, negaverunt: & tamen eum mundi casum relatum in arcanis vestris habetis.* At the same instant (that our Saviour expired upon the Cross) the mid-day Light was withdrawn, the Sun sealing up his Orb. They truly, who did not know, that this event too was prophesied of Christ, took this darkness for a (natural) Eclipse; and when they could not account for it (philosophically), they then denied the fact it self. And yet you have this fact related in your own (publick) Records\*. A noble Appeal this to the Roman *Præsides*! But there is one Sentence in it, which appears to Dr. Sykes, as it stands at present, very difficult and hardly intelligible†. The difficulty with him is, how the same persons that at first thought it a natural Eclipse, should afterwards, when they were told it was a preternatural Eclipse, deny that there was any Eclipse at all, either natural or preternatural. For which reason, to make all easy

\* Tertullian. Apolog. cap. xxi. See Haverc. in loc.

† Def. p. 43. Dissertat. p. 36, 37.



and good sense, the Doctor would insert a negative particle in it, and explains the whole in this manner. *Those, says he, who knew nothing of a Prophecy, that God designed to cause the Sun at that time to be Eclipsed, did (not) imagine, that that extraordinary darkness proceeded from an Eclipse, whereas in reality it did proceed from an Eclipse: They not considering nor imagining the reason of such a preternatural darkness, denied that there could be an Eclipse, contrary to known fact, and to what their own accounts bear witness to\**. By which Interpretation and Criticism, the Doctor, as I apprehend, has quite destroyed the whole Thought and Sense of *Tertullian*, and made it ten times more obscure and perplexed than it was before. The Learned *Father* never intended to say, that these Adversaries did *not imagine* the darkness at the Passion to have been an *Eclipse*, but just the contrary, that at first they *did imagine it to be so*. And that this is the true meaning of *Tertullian*, is evident from that very Passage of *Origen*, which Dr. Sykes had produced before, and made so much noise with. For there we find the Pagans first asserting, that *at the time of Christ's Passion there was nothing but a common and natural Eclipse of the Sun* †. But when *Origen* had

\* Def. p. 43, 44.

† Dicunt, quia sicut solet fieri in Solis defectione, sic facta est tunc Defectio. Orig. ub. sup.

See above. p. 43, 45.

confuted this pretence, then they proceed to question the fact it self\*; just like the Men in *Tertullian*, who at first called the darkness at the Passion a common Eclipse, *Deliquium utique putaverunt*; but when they found, this darkness could not be a common Eclipse, and was not to be accounted for upon principles of Philosophy, then rather than admit it to be preternatural and miraculous, they deny the fact it self, *ratione non deprehensâ, negaverunt*. Where is the difficulty in all this? And how could the Doctor perceive any, unless he was disposed for a *nodum in scirpo*? To me the words and sense are so clear, as to need no Comment, and exclude all mistake. The particle *non* indeed would make *Tertullian* very unintelligible, and the Dr.'s Paraphrase is beyond my comprehension. The Pagans, says the Doctor, *did not imagine* the darkness *to be an Eclipse*. What did they imagine it to be then? To be *preternatural*, or *nothing*? If the first, why did they deny the fact at all? If the latter, why did they not deny it in the first instance, without demurring upon it a while, till the *ratio* of it could not be found? Again. *In reality*, says the Doctor, *it did proceed from an Eclipse*. What a *natural Eclipse*? That's what no Christian *Father* would affirm. Or was it no *natural Eclipse*, but an extraordinary darkness? Then the Doctor's sentence in effect is this, that the *darkness* at the Passion

\* See above, p. 45, 46.]

*proceeded from an extraordinary darkness, which, I think, is no very good sense; it being a little difficult to me to conceive, how a darkness can be said to proceed from a darkness. Once more. They not considering nor imagining the reason of such a preternatural darkness, denied that there could be an Eclipse, contrary to known fact, and to what their own accounts bear witness to. Here we have Jargon and Ambiguities again. For what is the meaning of Eclipse? The Doctor, who appears such an Enemy to an improper use of that word, should mean a natural Eclipse. And then, where is the wonder, in the Pagans denial of a natural Eclipse, if the darkness was really preternatural? But if his Eclipse means no more than an extraordinary darkness, why does he use that word to explain Tertullian, which is not in Tertullian himself, and serves only to obscure his sense? This is to shew, how widely Dr. Sykes has mistaken the true sense of Tertullian, and how far his Paraphrase is from clearing it. The Father's Text is plain and pure enough already, and wants no new insertions of negative particles; and that interpretation of it, which I have given above, has been admitted without any difficulty by Joseph Scaliger\*, and the late very Learned Editor of the Apology, Sigebertus Havercamp†.*

\* Scal. Animadv. in Euseb. p. 171.

† Not. in loc.

I cannot conclude this head, without doing a piece of Justice to two great Men, *Grotius* and *Huetius*, upon whom *Dr. Sykes* on occasion of this Passage of *Tertullian* has thrown some very rude and injurious Aspersions. These excellent Writers in their quotations of *Tertullian* had omitted the words, *ratione non deprehensâ negaverunt*. Upon which *Dr. Sykes* breaks out into this severe censure of them. *Such careless citations of Authors can hardly be reconciled to Truth and Faithfulness; and shew, how little trust is to be placed in quotations from any Writer, whilst they are not the subject of any Controversy; or else it shews, that these great Men saw the difficulty, and omitted what they did, because they could not well tell how to account for it\**. Behold the sagacity of the Doctor in smelling and discovering a Plot! *Moderns* and *Antients* are, it seems, all alike in making wrong citations; all are to be suspected of carrying on some sinister ends and designs by them, except one faithful Admirer of *Truth* and *Sincerity*. But pray, what difficulty did these great Men see, that could deter them from citing *Tertullian* faithfully? Were they afraid, think you, of publishing an idle objection of the Pagans? Why should they be more afraid, than *Tertullian* himself? And why should they be discouraged from publishing such an objection as this, when they had published twenty others much more consider-

\* Def. p. 47.



## P O S T S C R I P T. 87

able? Good Doctor, be not quite so jealous and suspicious; honesty and sincerity are not yet confined to one single Person. As to these two Writers, I believe, I can give a very good account of their omissions in citing *Tertullian*. You must know, the words *ratione non deprehensâ negaverunt*, were first published from a MS. of *Fuld* by *Rigaltius* in 1635 \*; in all the Editions before this they were wanting; and even that of *Pamelius*, in the same year, tho' it pretends to follow exactly *Rigaltius's* Text, has left them out. Is it not therefore very possible and probable too, that *Grotius* and *Huetius* might make their extracts from some Edition of *Tertullian*, which had not these words? For my own part, I had rather suppose this to be the case; and whether such a supposition may be justly admitted, I leave to the arbitration of better Judges.

\* *Ratione non depreh.] Utiliter imò necessariè his augeri debebat Tertull. ut fecit Rig. ex præclaro Cod. Fuld. Legebatur antea, non scierunt. Et tamen &c. Haverc. in loc.*

F I N I S.

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E R R A T A.

P. 16. Note a. l. 1. *pro εἰπεντες l. εἰπεντες.* l. 4. & 10. *pro ὀλυμπίαντες l. ὀλυμπιάδες.* P. 27. N. t. *pro ἀπὸ l. ἀπὸ.* P. 55. *ὁ ᾧ.* P. 84. *perceive. l. perceive.*



